Mennonites in Early Modern Poland & Prussia

Peter J. Klassen

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Peter J. Klassen

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To Nancy, dedicated partner,
supportive critic, and loving wife

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Preface

"The time is out of joint." This phrase from one of Hamlet's soliloquies is an apt description of Europe in the sixteenth century. Economic opportunities brought new demographic patterns. Geographical horizons expanded, presenting new vistas for adventure, colonization, and trade. Long-established practices and beliefs were questioned and often changed. In a remarkable confluence of history, giants in various fields shook Europe to its foundations. Erasmus, prince of the humanists, presented intellectual alternatives to traditional assumptions; Luther championed broad changes in long-accepted religious beliefs and practices; and Copernicus jolted the scientific and religious world with his *On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres*. Many more, such as reformers Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin, gained a following strong enough to challenge traditional religion in Switzerland and France and in many other areas of Europe. Thomas Cranmer and his associates did the same in England. It was an era of creativity and change, of promise and expectation, but also a time of unease and foreboding.

Many leaders were not convinced that new options were better than traditional patterns. Defense of the old clashed with the advance of the new, and the confrontations that resulted raised serious concerns about unforeseen consequences. In this collision of worlds, there would be winners and losers, triumph and defeat, and many innocent victims. In few arenas was the confrontation of differing views as sharp and profound as in religion. For well over a century, Europe was convulsed by religious conflict, for the claims of religion were often submitted to the arbitrament of military force and economic power.

Amid these conflicts, Europe evolved into countries and areas where the combination of church and state influence determined religious policy. For those outside the pale of state-supported faith communities, there was little tolerance. In many instances, their options were few: flight, expulsion, loss of property, imprisonment, and death. Conflicts such as the Schmalkaldic War, the Wars of Religion in France, or the Spanish Hapsburg struggle to rid the Low Countries of "heresy" demonstrated how intense and widespread religious clashes could be. These clashes were often part of the struggle for self-determination and greater independence in the political and economic arenas. Nonetheless, throughout much of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a large part of Europe found itself in a cauldron of war, uncertainty, and religious change.

Especially during the second half of the sixteenth century, governments and churches in Europe developed a process of "confessionalization" designed to form regional partnerships between governments and state churches. The Peace of Augsburg set the stage in 1555 with its determined assertion that rulers would decide the religion of a particular state. Later, when the Thirty Years War spread destruction and death through much of central Europe, the peace treaties that finally brought a cessation to the slaughter affirmed the close bond between state and religious authorities. In some instances, a close working relationship developed between the Lutheran, Reformed, and Anglican churches and the respective governments; in other instances, the Catholic Church maintained its traditional ties with state authorities. In all such arrangements, close collaboration between state-approved churches and political institutions was designed to promote political stability and religious uniformity. Such arrangements were not likely to welcome religious or social dissent.

For members of the Anabaptist-Mennonite movement, who declined to be members of the official church in their region, the prospects often were bleak. For many nonconformists, the choices were limited and the consequences severe.

Nonconformist Movements

Religious leaders such as Martin Luther in Germany and Ulrich Zwingli in Switzerland successfully launched movements of change. Both leaders, however, retained close ties with the existing political order. At the same

time, other reform efforts championed more sweeping changes. A number of radically different views gained a following. In some instances, as in the Peasants' War in Germany, leaders called for change in social and economic as well as religious issues. Thus, Thomas Müntzer, whom Luther once recommended for a pastoral appointment,[1] urged that reform be extended to include redress of economic and social injustices. The Memmingen Articles, a dramatic contemporary call for economic and social reform, echoed sentiments similar to Luther's call for *sola scriptura* but also demanded substantial expansion of social and economic opportunities. Writers of the document said they were prepared to withdraw any statement shown to be contrary to Scripture.

Rulers, however, had little interest in debating the rights of peasants and workers. When many spoken and written demands failed, massive uprisings convulsed parts of Germany and neighboring regions in a bloody struggle. Only determined repression finally ended the turmoil. Champions of traditional church and state practices as well as reformers such as Luther and Zwingli denounced the revolutionary movement as a product of radical reformers such as the Anabaptists, who had called for a church composed of persons baptized as believers not as infants. Ironically, Müntzer himself neither taught nor practiced rebaptism.

Other expressions of radical reform arose in Switzerland, Moravia, the Netherlands, and elsewhere. An early expression of remarkably different views became evident in Zurich in the 1520s. Here Zwingli had launched a reform but had retained close ties with the state. When some of his followers insisted that their understanding of Scripture should guide matters of faith and practice rather than the laws of the state, a division occurred. The "radicals" insisted that baptism should be given only to those who had voluntarily chosen to "follow Christ" and that infant baptism was not biblical baptism. They called for reform in the church and a lifestyle patterned on the Sermon on the Mount. The "Swiss Brethren," also known as Anabaptists—a term often applied indiscriminately to a wide range of nonconformists—quickly found that rebaptism was punishable by death. As early as 1527, one of the group was executed by drowning in the Limmat River in Zurich. Others were expelled or imprisoned.

Other radical views gained a following in various parts of Europe. Some called for religious, others for economic change. Virtually everywhere, adherents of such positions were condemned; state governments

suppressed dissident elements by force. Numerous groups of reform and dissent arose. Some survived and expanded; others were crushed by the combined power of state and church.

Persecution of the followers of such teachings became ever more widespread. As a result, a situation resembling the Peasants' Revolt in south Germany arose in north Germany and the Netherlands. Dissent was dealt with harshly, and some leaders of nonconformist religious bodies contended that force should be countered with force. Champions of such a position came from numerous reform elements, including some Anabaptists who gained control of the city of Münster and announced that the "New Jerusalem" was to be created. For a short period of time, the city was under control of these violent radicals. In 1535, Catholic and Protestant forces joined and seized the city, restoring the former system and executing the leaders. The Müntzer fiasco had found a counterpart in the north; in both instances, earlier leaders had denounced resorting to violence. It was evident that Catholics and Protestants were prepared to cooperate to combat movements viewed as dangerous to the social, political, and economic order.

The Münster experiment was long used to define the dangers posed by Anabaptism. While many Anabaptists in the Netherlands and North Germany had joined this violent movement, others insisted that this appeal to violence and coercion was not the way to reform the church. Among those who denounced violence as an aberration of biblical belief and practice was Menno Simons, a former Catholic priest in the Netherlands. Biblical study had convinced him that the teachings of the peaceful Anabaptists conformed to Christ's teachings. He joined them and soon emerged as their leader. Within a few years his name was attached to this movement.

Many Anabaptists, especially those in Dutch towns and villages, had not joined the Münster radicals.[2] Nevertheless, the event was long used to tar the whole movement. As a result, Catholics and many Protestants alike were determined to suppress all Anabaptists, whether they were Moravian Hutterites, Swiss or German *Täufer*, or Dutch Mennonites.[3] Stories of the subsequent suffering of these peaceful radicals are recorded in *The Martyrs Mirror*, a graphic account of hundreds of martyrdoms, mostly in the sixteenth century,[4] and largely from the Netherlands and North Germany. These peaceful Anabaptists, or Mennonites, had become especially

numerous in the Netherlands, which was at that time under Spanish rule. Both Charles V and his son Philip, king of Spain, pursued these "heretics" with a vengeance. Very few states were ready to give shelter to those who rejected official church teachings and policies, so options were few and safety was elusive for Mennonites.

Since political and religious authorities insisted that the Anabaptist-Mennonite movement needed to be eradicated, those threatened became hunted persons. At the same time, they rejected any call for violence; the "peaceful Christ" was to be their example. Thus, even though the "Swiss Brethren" shared some of Müntzer's goals, such as his appeal to social justice, they rejected his call to the "fist" and "war."[5] Similarly, Menno Simons denounced the violence displayed in Münster,[6] and exhorted his fellow-believers to be prepared to be "sheep among wolves." Yet propagandists continued to spread charges alleging that Anabaptism was, at its core, a movement committed to the overthrow of political and religious practices. It was hardly surprising that most states wanted no Anabaptists, including Mennonites, within their borders, and persecution became widespread.

A Rare Island of Toleration

A notable exception to the kind of intolerance and persecution that characterized much of Europe could be found in the kingdom of Poland, known as the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania after 1569. Here persons from the Netherlands as well as a good number from other regions found a rare refuge. Although most of them settled in the northern part of Poland, known as Royal, or Polish Prussia,[7] toleration extended to other parts of the realm as well.

Analyses of this age of European upheaval have paid scant attention to Poland, especially the Vistula Delta, despite its remarkable contributions to both the Renaissance and the Reformation. The fact that the Polish Parliament, or *Sejm*,[8] established a policy of toleration while most of Europe was decidedly intolerant has not been given the attention it deserves. Often studies of the Reformation make virtually no mention of the pioneering Polish policy of religious toleration.

A long tradition of respect for local autonomy, as well as shared authority among crown, church, *Sejm*, and local government, had kept Poland free from unchecked autocratic rule. Despite crown, noble, and episcopal

jurisdictions, cities such as Danzig (Gdańsk), Elbing (Elbląg) and Thorn (Toruń) were economically powerful enough to assert a large measure of autonomy. They had helped the king break the power of the Teutonic Knights and so felt entitled to special recognition. All of these cities at some time allowed Mennonites to settle on their land. Nonetheless, the degree of acceptance accorded Mennonites living in Royal Prussia was not always constant. City governments changed, economic conditions fluctuated, and religious tensions varied. However, it was in this region, with its diversity of governmental structures and policies and with a common focal point in the Polish crown, that religious refugees found a surprisingly large measure of freedom. From the beginning of their flight to Royal Prussia in the 1530s until the dismemberment of Poland in the late eighteenth century, Mennonites found champions in a variety of political, religious, and economic leaders. Foremost among them was the Polish king himself.

Here, in the Vistula Delta and along the river to Warsaw, a variety of landlords permitted Mennonites to settle. Indeed, cities, church dignitaries, nobles, and the king invited them. Sometimes they established new settlements, and at other times they became members of existing communities. Gradually they built, not a "city upon a hill," but rather a new homeland along a river, Poland's mighty Vistula.

Variant Spellings of Names and Places

Historians of early modern Poland often encounter variant spellings of names. Readers of English studies of Polish history are aware that scholars are far from unanimous in their references to Polish persons and places. Some writers tend to view impressive histories such as the *Cambridge History of Poland* as authoritative, yet it is far from uniform in its anglicized forms of Polish names. Thus an important king of Poland is listed as Władisław, Ladislas, and Vladislav; his successor appears as John Casimir, to be followed by Jan Sobieski. Names of places also appear in varied spellings. In the contemporary documents, German, Latin and Polish versions of the same place may occur with no attempt to observe uniformity.

In an excellent recently published scholarly work on Royal Prussia (Karin Friedrich, *The Other Prussia*), names usually retain the spelling commonly used during the period under consideration. With a few ex-

ceptions, I have followed this policy as well. Some writers use only present forms of names. Thus, Königsberg becomes Kaliningrad (sometimes Królewiec, the Polish term), and Marienwerder becomes Kwidzyn.

In most instances, I have used forms of names that were used officially by towns and villages or by a majority of inhabitants. In first references to places, I have usually listed the commonly used name, followed by the alternative one (usually German or Polish). Thus Danzig is used regularly throughout the existence of Royal Prussia, since that was the form commonly used by the city during that period. Gdańsk is used as the Polish form, later to become the standard spelling. Similarly, I have used Elbing, a largely German city with Elbląg as an alternate, but Włocławek, with its Polish population, and Leslau as alternate. In instances where a form of a name is so well established that to list an alternate would seem pedantic, I have used the widely recognized form, such as Warsaw, or Vistula. Similarly, I have used Anglicized forms for a number of areas, such as Mazovia or Pomerania.

Names of persons are far from standardized in various archival and other sources. Thus, a prominent Mennonite leader is variously listed as Hendrik, Hendrich, and Heinrich Donner. Similarly, names of cities and villages sometimes illustrate considerable divergence. Thus, especially in earlier times, village names varied. A map published in 1753 shows Ladekopp as Ladkop, while Bärwalde appears as Behrwald. In such instances, I have used the spelling that eventually became the standard one except when quoting documents where another form is used. In this study the index lists both German and Polish forms of names.

FOR TWO AND A HALF CENTURIES, Mennonites lived under the Polish crown. Then, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, Poland was divided among Russia, Prussia, and Austria. Most of the area where Mennonites lived now came under Prussian rule. Although considerable attention has been given to the Mennonite story since the partitions, the years under Polish rule have received relatively scant attention. This volume seeks to correct at least part of that neglect.

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CHAPTER 1

A Haven in Troubled Times

Early in the seventeenth century, the Dutch dramatist Joost van den Vondel graphically depicted the desperate efforts of religious dissidents seeking a refuge. Van den Vondel, then the most famous person of letters in the Netherlands, wrote a drama whose deeply rooted appeal was underscored by its annual performance for centuries in Amsterdam. The drama, *Gijsbrecht van Aemstel,* depicts a people in great danger and distress, uncertain about their future and unsure what to do. The archangel Raphael appears in a vision to their leader, Gijsbrecht, and presents a plan for their escape from peril and difficulty to freedom:

> *Depart, go to the fertile Prussian soil*
> *Where the Vistula rushes down from the Polish mountains*
> *And pleasantly washes its fruitful, luxuriant banks. . . .*
> *There build a city, called New Holland . . . .*[1]

Van den Vondel was born in Cologne after his family fled Antwerp in the 1580s ahead of the armies of Philip II, which were trying to rid the area of "heretics." His family members later returned to their roots in the Netherlands and settled in Amsterdam, where they joined a Mennonite church. For a time, Vondel served as a deacon in this church.[2]

By the time Vondel wrote *Gijsbrecht* in 1638, times had changed dramatically in the Netherlands, which was now celebrated for its liberties.

Mennonites were not only tolerated but were becoming well established. However, Vondel's drama continued to reflect contemporary events in much of Europe. Its viewers could not be unaware that the terrible Thirty Years War still raged, or that Swiss Anabaptists were still being hunted and expelled, or that severe tensions between Catholics and Calvinists still persisted in France long after that nation ended its fierce Wars of Religion. Vondel's drama played to people who recognized the parallels between Mennonites who had found a new home in Poland and the followers of Gijsbrecht.

The literary images of Poland created by Vondel were vigorously reinforced by real-life economic ties between the Netherlands and Poland, especially between the powerful commercial dynamos, Amsterdam and Danzig (Gdańsk),[3] recognized as the proud "Queen of the Baltic" because it was the dominant trading center in the region. In part, conditions for these economic ties had been created earlier when the Teutonic Knights established a number of important political and economic centers in regions near or along the Vistula River, Poland's major artery of trade. Many of these centers had become members of the Hansa, the north European association of port cities and other trading centers that dominated much of the economic life of the region from later medieval through early modern times.

The Teutonic Knights and Polish Rulers

The pivotal role of the Order of Teutonic Knights in this story might seem anachronistic, associated as they are in the public mind with the Crusades centuries earlier. Like other crusading orders of medieval times, the Teutonic Knights were founded to help regain control of the Holy Land. When these efforts foundered, the Knights turned their efforts toward the Baltic. There a local duke, Conrad of Mazovia, appealed for help in fighting the "heathen Prussians," a people found along the southeastern shores of the Baltic who were resistant to the advances of Polish nobles and the Catholic Church. When Conrad asked for military assistance, the Teutonic Knights, sent forth with papal and imperial blessings, came to his assistance.

But the Knights were interested in more than driving out opponents of Conrad. In short order, they established their own power centers along

Malbork Castle (Marienburg). Built by the Teutonic Knights, this castle dominated political, economic, and administrative affairs in the region for more than two centuries.

the Baltic coast and up the Vistula River, opening the doors for settlers from the west. New towns grew up around the numerous castles erected by the Knights, and a new society was established according to principles of law outlined in Hanseatic codes, especially those derived from Lübeck, the capital of the Hansa, and disseminated from Kulm (Chełmno), a major center of the Knights. Fortified castles gave the Knights strong centers of political and military control. At the same time, the new law and order provided a setting where products from the interior as well as the delta could safely be moved to centers of trade. Danzig, as well as Elbing, Thorn, and Kulm, became important links in the trading chain that tied the region to markets in other countries, especially in Western Europe.

The expansion of the territorial rule of the Knights aroused the opposition of the Polish crown, and intermittent warfare resulted. In 1410, the Knights suffered a major defeat in the battle of Grunwald (Tannenberg),

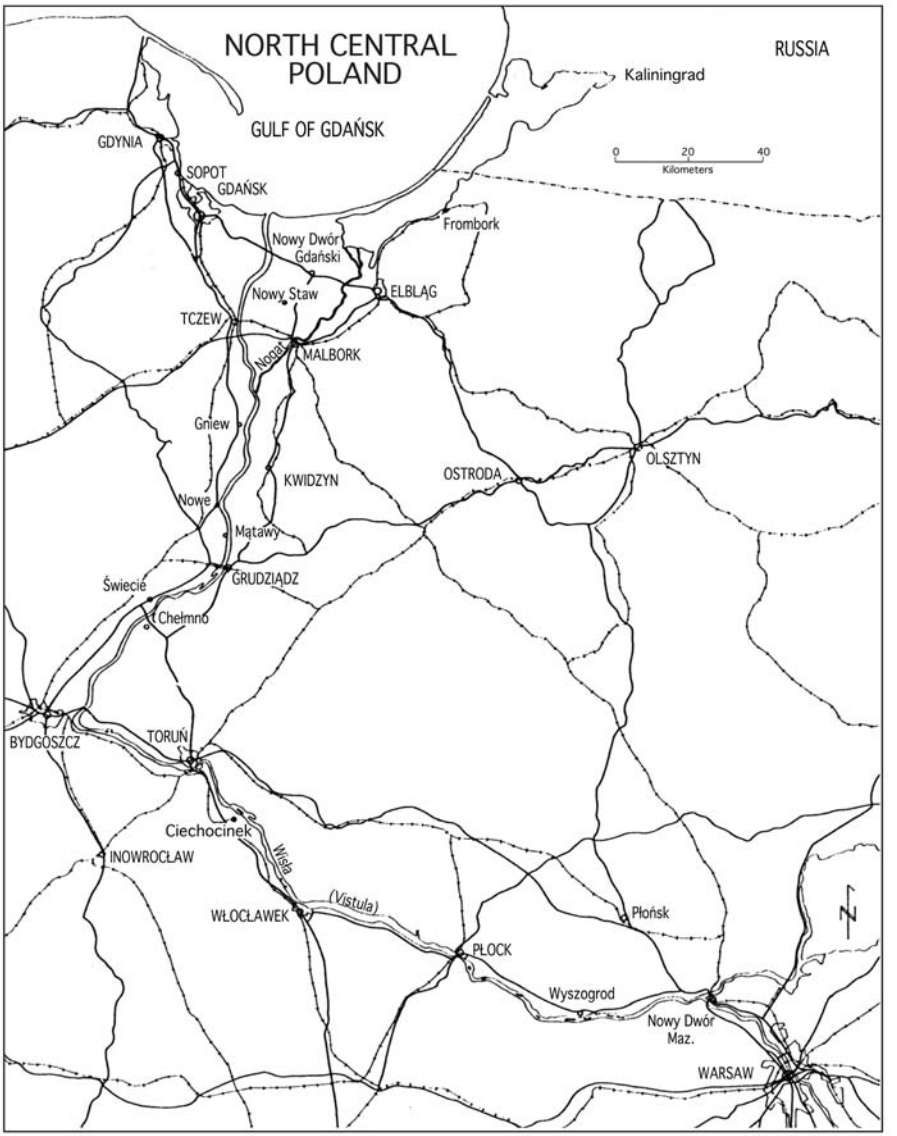
but no satisfactory peace could be arranged. In 1454, the Polish king again moved against the Knights, this time with strong support from restless city councils in major centers such as Danzig, Marienburg (Malbork), and Thorn. The resulting Peace of Thorn (1466) brought the western lands of the Knights, which came to be known as Royal Prussia, directly under the Polish crown. The Knights retained the eastern part of their lands, with a capital in Königsberg.[4] After 1525, this was known as Ducal Prussia.

In the new political structure emerging from these wars, Danzig and other cities along the Vistula were given a large measure of autonomy and significant areas of land, usually adjacent to the city itself as a reward for supporting the king. Unsurprisingly, as the wealth and importance of Danzig increased, the city tried to expand its control of its own destiny. Danzig functioned as a virtually independent city-state, although the crown continued to assert its preeminent position, occasionally resorting to military and economic force to maintain this recognition.

A Quest for Religious Change without Warfare

It was into this region of new political structures and vibrant economic development that the religious movements of reform came early in the sixteenth century. The guilds and other members of the middle class in Danzig, Elbing, and Thorn proved receptive to Luther's call for reformation. Most of the traders who settled in these commercial bastions were German. The language of the cities, government, and commerce was largely German, so Luther's writings could easily be disseminated and understood. Despite strong opposition from the Catholic hierarchy and much of the general populace, Danzig embraced Luther's teachings, and other cities soon followed. Catholic king and hierarchy could not stop the spread of the new teachings. Another victory for the Lutheran position occurred in 1525 when Albert, Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights, himself embraced the Lutheran faith, took the title "Duke of Prussia," and secularized his lands. Albert swore allegiance to the king of Poland to gain his support, and in so doing, became a vassal of the king instead of a subordinate of the papacy.

Elsewhere in Europe, the religious and political struggles also produced new power structures between governments and some Reformation movements such as the Lutheran and the Reformed faiths. However,



Map of North Central Poland (drawn by Gail Enns).

there was no room for those religious groups who rejected ties with the state. As the savage efforts of Charles V and his son Philip II mounted, bringing prison and death to many Mennonites in the Netherlands and other regions, some sought new homes where they could live their faith.

It was at this time that Mennonites began coming to the Vistula Delta. Meanwhile, Lutheranism was gaining ever more followers in the region as well. Already closely tied to Western Europe by trade, the delta and its surroundings proved to be one of the few areas where Mennonites found relative toleration. Moreover, the growth of Lutheranism and several kinds of nonconformity did not plunge the nation into war.

At the end of the second quarter of the sixteenth century, Mennonites were still found in substantial numbers in several of the states of the Netherlands, but the policies of Charles V, his son Philip II, and their generals, especially the Duke of Alva, were designed to change that. Alva resolved to carry out Philip's demands to rid the land of heretics, including the large Mennonite and other Anabaptist communities in the southern Netherlands such as Flanders.[5] Some of the Anabaptists were fortunate enough to escape with their lives; the fates of many others are chronicled in van Braght's *Martyrs' Mirror*.[6] Despite this harsh persecution, Anabaptism was not exterminated in this region. Because Calvinism had not yet been embraced by a broad spectrum of the population, a recent study concluded that "Mennonites . . . kept Protestantism in the Netherlands in existence during the dark years of Hapsburg persecution in the 1540s."[7] In 1565, in the neighboring states of Jülich, Cleves, and Berg, Duke Wilhelm issued a similarly harsh decree ordering severe punishment of "Anabaptists, those who have been rebaptized, adherents of Menno Simons and David Joris,[8] and similar Sacramentarians."[9]

As the Netherlands rose in revolt against the Spanish overlords and turmoil swept much of the area, hundreds of Mennonites fled to the northern provinces, where the Spanish control was weak. In 1581, a bold declaration of independence[10] would become the foundation of a new, independent nation. By then, however, a good number of people from the Netherlands and nearby lands had already left for a place that would provide refuge and hope for a peaceful future. For them, as with Gijsbrecht, that place was Royal Prussia.

Title page from T. J. van Braght, *Martyrs Mirror*. Graphic descriptions and engravings depicted the death of scores of Mennonites and other martyrs.

Political and Economic Factors in Mennonite Migration

The lively and highly profitable sea trade between Amsterdam and Danzig provided many opportunities for Mennonite emigrants to reach the shores of the Baltic. Land transportation was also used. The cities shared a cosmopolitan flavor, and both enjoyed the prominence that, at least in the last half of the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth centuries, bordered on dominance in their respective regions.

An analysis of shipping records between Amsterdam and Danzig from 1550 to 1650 demonstrates the powerful ties between the two centers. Records gleaned from archives preserved in Gdańsk[11] and from the Gemeente Archief in Amsterdam independently attest to a vibrant economic relationship that was the lifeblood of both cities. Especially during the latter part of the sixteenth century, the number of Dutch ships sailing into Danzig increased dramatically.[12]

The trend continued well into the seventeenth century. During the first two decades of this century, as the toll registers show, the average annual number of ships sailing through the Danish Sound from Danzig exceeded one thousand.[13] Most of these ships were Dutch, bound for Amsterdam. Grain was by far the most important cargo,[14] so Amsterdam became the "granary of Europe."[15] Since in 1600 some 70 percent of the Baltic grain trade was shipped through Danzig,[16] it quickly becomes evident that the Danzig-Amsterdam axis was vital to the economy of the region. Of the 84,800 lasts of grain shipped through the Sound in 1618, 84 percent were sent in Dutch ships.[17] In addition to grain, ships sailing from Danzig carried potash, timber, hemp, wool and other commodities. Amsterdam, in turn, loaded ships bound for its partner on the Baltic with salt, spices, almonds, wine and other products.[18] More than three hundred Amsterdam merchants participated in the Danzig trade during the first half of the seventeenth century. Large firms employed their own factors, or representatives, in the Baltic port and were thus able to respond quickly to changing commercial situations. Among foreigners in Danzig, the Dutch were dominant. The Netherlanders even had their own bank in the city's chief business center, the Artushof.[19]

Urbanization in Western Europe, coupled with the enclosure movement, which brought changes in agricultural production, made grain from the Baltic a critical foodstuff. It is not surprising that during the war for in-

dependence in the Netherlands, the Spanish commander, Parma, informed his king that if the Spanish could seal the coast from Baltic imports, Holland and Zeeland could be starved into submission. The notorious "Sea Beggars," the makeshift fleet of the rebels, however, refused to allow that to happen, and the revolt became a successful revolution. Amsterdam's trade with Danzig had played no small role.

The thriving commercial setting in Danzig created a wide range of opportunities for entrepreneurs, merchants, artisans, laborers, and, in the nearby lowlands, farmers. During the sixteenth century, immigration rapidly increased the city's population, and this continued well into the seventeenth century. Although some of the new settlers came from Sweden, Scotland, Germany, and France, most came from the Netherlands,[20] or Low Countries, a term which at that time approximated the territory of today's Belgium and the Netherlands.

The port city of Danzig enjoyed a large measure of independence gained during the long struggle between Polish kings and the Teutonic Knights. Other cities also were rewarded with substantial self-determination, although they remained under the Polish crown. Similarly, some powerful Polish lords enjoyed virtual self-rule. All of these were allowed a large measure of local autonomy not only in political and economic matters but also in religion. Thus, when new religious forces gained a number of adherents in Poland during the Reformation, there was no uniform policy for dealing with them.

At first, the Hansa attempted to avoid giving assistance to any movements associated with departures from "official" Catholic religion. Then, as Lutheranism attracted a strong following, especially in the ports of northern Germany, efforts were made to restrict commercial business to Catholic and Lutheran centers only. The growth of the Reformed movement soon made such a position untenable, however; Calvinism was not about to be excluded from commercial life in northern Europe. Its growth in Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, and Scotland assured it a position of prominence, even if treaties such as the Peace of Augsburg (1555) refused to grant it official recognition.

Mennonites: To Tolerate or to Exclude

With its diverse political, economic, and religious systems, Poland became noted for its toleration. In stark contrast to most of the rest of Europe, where forces of religious persecution held sway, Poland was a patchwork of toleration and exclusion. Vigorous pronouncements against Anabaptists often went unenforced or alternated with invitations to settle. Rulers were torn between the perceived threat of heresy and the economic benefits of hosting Mennonite settlers. Not surprisingly, many immigrants came to this haven of relative religious freedom and established their own communities of faith.

When dealing with movements defined as heretical and insurrectionist, authorities could usually agree that in theory these should not be tolerated. Not surprisingly, the Hansa, whose membership included centers where the three major religious persuasions were present, found it easy to join other important commercial and religious bodies in condemning heretics. No member was to permit heretics to settle within its borders. In 1535, in the aftermath of the Münster debacle, delegates at the sessions of the league decided that the problem of heresy was serious enough to merit vigorous action. A resolution, adopted unanimously, stipulated that "if a congregation in a Hansa city holds to the error and heretical teachings of the Anabaptists," that city would be barred from the "freedoms, laws, and privileges of the trading offices"[21] of all members of the Hansa. When Wismar, perhaps because of its alleged toleration of some Anabaptists, failed to persuade other members that it was free of all heresy, the league instructed Hamburg and Lübeck to check out the allegations. Evidently the investigation provided little if any alarming evidence, for Wismar continued its membership in the Hansa.

Despite warnings issued by the Hansa about transporting heretics,[22] ships from the Netherlands continued to bring religious refugees, suggesting that shipowners were far more concerned with the safe and efficient delivery of cargo than with enforcement of religious policies.[23] The Mennonites were allowed to settle quietly in sections of the marshy Danzig Werder, or delta, owned by the city. These Dutch settlers established agricultural practices so distinctive that "Holländereien" came to be a term applied to their farms and practices.

Ducal Prussia to the east also attempted to address the issue. When

its Lutheran bishop, Paul Speratus, complained to Duke Albert that the duchy harbored heretics, the duke ordered their expulsion.[24] Subsequently, in 1545, the duke, warned by Melanchthon that Anabaptists were settling in his duchy, responded, "We are of one mind with you; if Anabaptists will not convert [to Lutheranism], they cannot live here."[25] Albert issued a number of expulsion edicts. Nonetheless, when his officials warned that Mennonites were vital to the economy, Albert permitted exceptions. Religious uniformity might be highly desirable, but for the duke, a healthy economy was even more important. It is ironic that Duke Albert, the first political leader to declare Lutheranism the state religion of his realm, issued decrees condemning Anabaptism and other dissenting religious movements, whereas Catholic bishops, Lutheran city councils, lords professing various beliefs, and even the Polish king were permitting Anabaptists to settle in parts of Poland.

Similarly, ecclesiastical authorities such as the abbot of Pelplin, the bishop of Włocławek (Leslau), and the abbess of St. Bridget's convent in Danzig invited Mennonites to settle on lands adjacent to the city of Danzig and set up their craft and merchant centers. Various authorities ultimately permitted Mennonites to settle in most areas of the Vistula Delta, including the Danzig Werder (mostly west of the Vistula), the Large Werder between the Vistula and Nogat Rivers, the Little Werder southeast of the Nogat, as well as in a considerable tract of marshy, partially wooded land owned by some of the burghers of Elbing on the eastern side of the delta. Dutch windmills began to dot the countryside, while canals, dikes, and drainage ditches transformed swamps into fertile fields. Although these lands might be part of the royal domain, part of a lord's estate, owned by a town or by a church, economic advantage was far more important to most of these owners than adherence to a prescribed religion.

Polish kings also showed their appreciation of the economic contributions made by Mennonite settlers. One of the earliest surviving affirmations is that issued by King Władisław IV in 1642 when he declared that Mennonites had been invited to come to the Vistula Delta:

> We are well aware of the manner in which the ancestors of the Mennonite inhabitants of the Marienburg islands (Werder), both large and small, were invited here with the knowledge and by the will of the gracious King Sigismund Augustus, to areas that were barren, swampy, and

Overview of Gdańsk today. Situated at the mouth of the Vistula River, the city dominated Poland's bustling commercial life.

> unusable places in those islands. With great effort and at very high cost, they made these lands fertile and very productive. They cleared out the brush, and, in order to drain the water from these flooded and marshy lands, they built mills and constructed dams to guard against the Vistula, Nogat, Haff, Tiege and other streams.[26]

Later monarchs echoed these sentiments and often came to the support of the Mennonites, even though sometimes they also issued negative statements. It is hardly surprising that during the well over two centuries that Mennonites in this region lived under the Polish crown, policies governing Mennonites might sometimes be modified. Nevertheless, the fact that no Polish monarch ever expelled Mennonites from his realm indicates that usually there was a measure of continuity in royal policy.

Royal statements of toleration, however, did not abolish a large measure of local decision-making power in religious matters. City governments, landlords, ecclesiastical authorities, members of the nobility, and others had considerable discretion in religious matters in lands under

their jurisdiction. Thus, the Bishop of Warmia (Ermland), unlike some other bishops, emphatically opposed all efforts by Mennonites to settle in lands under his control and repeatedly urged other religious and lay leaders to refuse settlement rights to "heretics." Sometimes a king also departed from his usual toleration. Thus, in 1556, King Sigismund II Augustus requested suggestions from the provincial *sejmik* (diet) meeting in Marienburg for stopping the "destructive activities of the Anabaptists."[27] That same year, the castellan of Elbing presented a royal mandate in which the king expressed concern that "Anabaptists, Picards and other heretics" were being permitted to settle freely in the region. Indeed, he charged, not only were officials allowing such settlement; they were actually inviting and supporting "these destroyers of the general welfare."[28] It must therefore be recognized that settlement of Mennonites in the region sometimes led to serious debate and dissension in the regional *sejmik* of Royal Prussia, as well as in the national *Sejm*. Bishop Hosius of Warmia could always be counted on to support denunciations of religious dissidents, and he constantly urged the expulsion of "heretics."[29] But these pronouncements could be described as "promising everything, delivering nothing."[30] Similarly, when the diet of Thorn in 1594 declared that no Scottish merchants should be permitted to live in cities or on the land,[31] the decision meant little, since it lacked support from local government officials.

Toleration without Equality

In some instances, decrees of exclusion were enforced. The bishop of Warmia supported the exclusion of all Protestants. He hoped that by inviting the Jesuits to Royal Prussia, territory lost to Protestants would be regained. He warned that the history of the church showed that toleration of religions deviating from the Catholic Church, which alone held the true faith, had all too often brought tragic results.[32] The bishop was largely successful in implementing such a policy in his own see. Later bishops of Warmia echoed similar sentiments. Lacking nationwide support for this position, in 1648 the bishop urged that toleration in Royal Prussia should be extended to Lutherans only—in addition, of course, to Catholics.[33] Nonetheless, his bishopric itself was to harbor no Protestants at all; Warmia was to remain purely Catholic.[34] Sometimes the city council of Danzig took a similarly exclusivist position, but in this case, the intent was

to uphold and protect the Lutheran faith first and Catholicism second. In 1573, as Danzig prepared to send its representatives to the *Sejm* in Warsaw, it instructed its delegates to oppose religious toleration. Lutheranism and Catholicism should be the only accepted religions. To allow religious freedom would open the door to "Anabaptists, Calvinists and other sects."[35] Ultimately, this position gained little support.

As Protestant beliefs gained ground, especially in the cities, and as the Reformed or Calvinist faith claimed ever more adherents, Poland gradually moved toward a policy of broader toleration. In the middle of the sixteenth century, the number of non-Catholic nobles in the national *Sejm* equaled and briefly exceeded the number of Catholic nobles. Whether Catholic or not, however, most nobles supported religious toleration.

A dramatic demonstration of such a commitment occurred in 1573 at a session in Warsaw. With the death of Sigismund II Augustus in 1572, the Jagiellonian dynasty came to an end. Monarchs hereafter were elected. On 10 October 1572, nobles holding the rank of senator[36] in the *Sejm* issued a call for a national assembly in Warsaw, and it met on 6 January 1573. The assembled members of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, meeting to elect a new king and to chart a course that would prevent the religious strife "such as we clearly observe in other realms," signed an agreement not to engage in war "for differences of faith or church."[37] This declaration of toleration, inserted into a document known as the "Confederation of Warsaw," which constituted the parliamentary documentary basis of action, was adopted in the shadow of events such as the recent St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in France when thousands of Huguenots (Calvinists) were killed. Both Catholics and Protestants in Poland were dismayed by this event,[38] and vowed that warfare would not be part of Poland's struggle with religious change. Even though the pope and many members of the church hierarchy condemned this declaration as giving freedom to heresy, the Confederation of Warsaw marked a turning point in Polish history. For more than two centuries, subsequent kings had to swear to uphold this affirmation of toleration:

> Since there is in our Republic no little disagreement on the subject of religion, in order to prevent any such harmful strife from the beginning among our people on this account as we plainly see in other realms, we mutually promise for ourselves and our successors forever, under the

> bond of our oath, faith, honor, and conscience, that we who differ with regard to religion will keep the peace with one another, and will not for a different faith or a change of churches shed blood nor punish one another by confiscation of property, infamy, imprisonment, or banishment, and will not in any way assist any magistrate or office in such an act.[39]

This document adopted by the Confederation must surely be seen as one of the most inspiring highlights of the Reformation era.[40] Differences of religion were debated "with word rather than sword."[41] Signatories vowed to "keep the peace between ourselves and shed no blood."[42] This remarkable statement, as the Polish scholar Janusz Tazbir has shown, inspired hope in Poland and in many other countries. Echoes of this dramatic development were heard in France, where it was a factor in convincing the king to lift the siege of La Rochelle and in encouraging French Calvinists to seek the same rights that their co-religionists had in Poland.[43] Movements of reform elsewhere found inspiration in this remarkable triumph of the human spirit.[44] Just six years later, in 1579, as the northern provinces of the Netherlands united to throw off Spanish control, their Union of Utrecht echoed the sentiments of the Confederation of Warsaw with a staunch defense of religious toleration.[45] Significantly, the basic document of the Union of Utrecht has been described as an inspiration for Benjamin Franklin's "Join or Die" philosophy.[46] Furthermore, John S. Wise, noting that much of the American Declaration of Independence was not of English origin, contended that the Union of Utrecht of 1579 had been an important model.[47]

Two years later in 1581, the basic goals of the Union of Utrecht were incorporated into the Dutch Act of Abjuration, sometimes viewed as a virtual "Declaration of Independence." In turn, the Dutch Act of Abjuration has also been suggested as an important source of inspiration for those who drafted the American Declaration of Independence.[48] John Adams wrote, "The Dutch charters had been particularly studied, admired and imitated" in America, and the "analogy between the means by which the two republics arrived at independency . . . will infallibly draw them together."[49] Similarly, Jefferson noted in his autobiography that the "Dutch Revolution" gave confidence to the second Continental Congress that the American Revolution would likewise succeed. Professor Stephen Lucas has written that "of all the models available to Jefferson and the Continen-

tal Congress, none provided as precise a template for the Declaration as did the Plakkaat."[50]

All of this suggests that the statement issued by the Warsaw Confederation may be regarded as being dramatically progressive when seen in historical context. In Germany, the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 simply declared the ruler's right to determine a state's religion; then, some decades later, the destructive Thirty Years War engulfed Germany in a struggle that brought little religious freedom. Similarly, the French Wars of Religion brought widespread destruction and only a limited Edict of Toleration, which was revoked almost a century later. Switzerland still executed religious nonconformists in the early seventeenth century, as did Spain along with a number of other countries. Poland had found a different, if imperfect, solution. No one would be killed because of belief. Poland thus became the first large nation to assert a policy of religious toleration. Although some smaller states, such as Transylvania, took a similar step, no major country had already ventured onto this path. Some have claimed that the Netherlands was the first to do so, and indeed that country soon became a staunch defender of religious toleration, but the Polish action occurred several years before the Netherlands affirmed religious toleration.[51]

At the same time, it must be noted that while the power of Polish kings was constrained by the Confederation of Warsaw, the autonomy of local authorities remained powerfully entrenched. Danzig in particular insisted that it would follow its own course with regard to religious dissidents. It was determined to maintain its traditional large measure of independence even if, as in the case of Stefan Bathory, the king took up arms against the city to enforce recognition of royal authority.[52]

Such incidents did not necessarily mean the city disagreed with the crown; it simply meant that Danzig was determined to retain as much independence from the Polish crown as possible. Interestingly, when Calvinists in Danzig felt they were not being treated fairly or being granted the rights implied by the Confederation of Warsaw, they appealed to the Netherlands States General for support.[53] This was less surprising than it might seem. The Polish king had little direct political power in Danzig; however, the Netherlands, as Danzig's major importer of a variety of products, had economic muscle, and the Danzig city council had no desire to alienate its major trading partner.

Both Calvinists and Mennonites took advantage of their connections with the Netherlands. In this context, Royal Prussia became the setting for a continuous power struggle. Danzig was determined to retain its large measure of self-determination in religious, political, and economic matters. The *Sejm*, however, had set limits on what might be done in the religious arena, and the Warsaw Confederation remained in effect. Not surprisingly, however, efforts to restore the former dominance of the Catholic Church continued. Thus, in 1610 some representatives in the provincial *sejmik* of Royal Prussia urged that a mission be sent to Ducal Prussia to urge authorities there to expel "Zwinglians, Calvinists, Mennonites and other sectarians."[54] Such fatuous gestures were not taken seriously.

The Mennonite Struggle for Greater Equality

Frequent efforts to curtail Mennonite privileges created a spirit of constant vigilance. When various authorities in Royal Prussia imposed arbitrary restrictions and conditions on Mennonite communities, their leaders might appeal to the royal court in Warsaw or to the government in the Netherlands. Royal Prussian religious or secular bodies sometimes did call for more restrictive measures against Mennonites, including expulsion. In a 1676 session of the *sejmik*, for example, the *voivod* (governor) of Pomerelia launched an attack on Mennonites. In this case, he reserved his strongest venom for the city of Danzig, which, he alleged, had become "a nest of Mennonites."[55] God had punished the Vistula Delta by allowing the dams of the Vistula and Nogat rivers to break; the result was untold misery and flooding. For this, Danzig's tolerance of heretics was to blame.

Not surprisingly, the proud city, easily the strongest economic power in the diet, vigorously rejected such calumny. The city of Elbing joined Danzig in asserting that Mennonites had been especially helpful in rebuilding the dams. Furthermore, any observer visiting the lowlands would quickly be able to see where "a lazy and drunken peasant lived, and where the industrious, sober Mennonites lived." Then, showing the extent of their disdain for the *voivod*'s position, the representatives of Danzig and Elbing suggested that not only should Mennonites be allowed to remain but more should be invited to come. In view of such strong opposition, the president of the *sejmik* concluded that deliberation would now continue to the next agenda item.[56]

Debates about toleration of Mennonites often occurred, not in isolation, but in the shadow of other events that were more pressing than what should be done with new settlers. It is not surprising that cities, local lords, Catholic bishops and abbots, or other officials sometimes vacillated on religious policies affecting Mennonites. These changes might be rooted in principle, where one bishop might denounce the Mennonites as undesirable heretics, while another might come to their defense as good citizens. Other changes were more politically calculated. Thus, when the bishop of Kulm died, the question of who the next bishop should be was hotly debated. The king insisted that he had the right to nominate a bishop to a vacant see; the Prussian *sejmik*, as the parliament of Royal Prussia, felt its voice should be heard; Danzig insisted that as the dominant city in the see of Kulm, it deserved to have a strong voice; and nearby bishops, as well as chapters of the cathedral, felt their voices should be considered.[57] All of this maneuvering for influence was, of course, watched carefully by the papal curia, which insisted that the final decision lay in Rome. The resulting power struggles sometimes produced alliances that benefited Mennonites.

Citizenship was another matter. The city of Elbing was one of the many entities that demonstrated a remarkable elasticity in adapting its policies of toleration to changing economic and social conditions. Starting in the 1560s, it leased large parts of the Ellerwald, a marshy area immediately to the west of the city, to Mennonites arriving from the Netherlands. A few years later, some city officials complained about the growing number of heretics in the region and warned against granting them citizenship in the cities. Yet in 1586, Elbing became the first major city in Royal Prussia to grant citizenship to Mennonites, admitting two of them to the ranks of the city's burghers,[58] and in the 1590s, Elbing allowed Mennonites to have their own church within the city.

In contrast, with few exceptions, Danzig denied citizenship to Mennonites until about 1800, but it allowed Mennonites to settle and build churches outside the city walls. The Frisians built their church in Neugarten in 1638, while the Flemish congregation built their church in Altschottland, just outside the Petershagen gate in 1648.[59] Danzig's laws stipulated that burghers had to be willing to bear arms to defend the city. Since Mennonites declined to bear arms, they could not be allowed to reside in the city.

Mennonites, City Council, and Guilds

In view of the contentious issues associated with groups who were neither Catholic nor Lutheran, Mennonites were usually required to maintain a low profile, at least in religious, political, and economic matters. While Danzig offered economic opportunity, it was limited. City regulation stipulated that only members of Lutheran or Catholic, and later also Reformed, churches could be recognized as masters of their profession, craft, or other work. This regulation created some awkward situations, for Mennonites had introduced the art of making lace, braid, and other forms of elegant cloth. When this industry became important and profitable, guilds tried repeatedly to exclude Mennonites from this profession, which they had brought to the city. When the city council took little action, the guilds turned to the king to support their request. A contemporary chronicler reported that when King Sigismund III visited Danzig in 1623, the guilds made their plea. However, the chronicler noted, "Up to the present time [1688], nothing has been done."[60] Throughout this period and beyond, the city council usually defended the Mennonites. The profits that Mennonite craftsmen brought to the city were simply too important to cut off, although at times the city council required Mennonites to make extra payments to the city coffers.[61]

Not until the middle of the eighteenth century did the guilds succeed in persuading a beleaguered king to issue a decree asserting a guild monopoly in this specific craft, thereby excluding Mennonites. By that time the income of the guilds had declined, the city was in economic distress, and the guilds were desperate to protect their economic position (see chap. 3).

Tensions were less pronounced in agricultural pursuits, for here the Mennonites brought skills that turned wasteland into what an observer described as "gardens."[62] In the delta, where much of the land was held either by the crown, the nobles, the Catholic Church, or cities such as Danzig and Elbing, Mennonites were welcomed as productive and skilled farmers. While some objected to so much land being made available to Mennonites, one response from the Danzig city council was typical: "These Netherlanders in short time have created wonderful, drained land, so that instead of the desolate acres, we now have 27 rent-paying farms."[63] Similar developments were noted in numerous places in the delta where Menno-

nites settled: Reichenberg (Bogatka), Käsemark (Kiezmark), villages near Tiegenhof (Nowy Dwór) or in the Ellerwald, Heubuden (Stogi), Orlofferfelde (Orłowski Pole), and many others. Repeatedly, landlords praised the new productivity of formerly flooded or deserted lands.

Mennonite successes in the delta drew the attention of religious and secular authorities further up the Vistula; soon cities such as Kulm and its bishop, as well as nobles and administrators of royal or church property, invited Mennonites to settle on their lands also.[64] The resulting contracts clearly indicate that the settlers were granted not only personal freedom and a great deal of liberty in developing the land leased to them but also the right to conduct trade, develop their own crafts, exercise local autonomy, and practice their own religion. In addition, when Mennonites, already exempt from military service, complained that troops marching along the Vistula were creating havoc, King John Casimir issued a decree declaring that Mennonites were to be free from obligation to quarter troops.[65]

A "New Holland" on the Banks of the Vistula

Not all those who came to this part of Poland were motivated by a quest for religious freedom. By the latter part of the sixteenth century, the northern Netherlands, which had successfully resisted Philip II's efforts to crush the movement for independence, provided a relatively free and tolerant home for Mennonites, yet many continued to seek new opportunities in Poland long after religious persecution was no longer a serious issue. Calvinists from a number of countries where they enjoyed full political and religious rights also came to take advantage of economic opportunity. They brought with them a wide range of skills, so that by the end of the sixteenth century, Danzig was the largest manufacturing and business center in the Baltic and in all of Poland.[66]

These immigrant artisans and craftsmen had made Danzig famous for its fine furniture, textiles, leather goods, glassware, precision instruments such as watches and navigation instruments, paper, and other products.[67] Luxury items made by gold and silversmiths as well as by artisans working with amber bore evidence to the growing wealth of the Renaissance city. Immigration records show that a large proportion of these skilled settlers came from the Netherlands.

By 1600, the city was alive with the activity of an almost incredible number of guild masters—reportedly more than three thousand—and as many as several thousand shops and businesses employing a dozen or more persons. By comparison, Krakow, Poland's second largest city, could boast of only seven hundred.[68] In addition, Danzig provided homes and employment for hundreds of craftsmen and laborers not belonging to a guild. With its strong commercial ties, its international community, and its robust economy, the city became a prosperous, enchanting, cosmopolitan capital of the Baltic.

As a bustling hub of unending variety, the city provided challenge and opportunity for all who wished to test their abilities. At the same time, the city had its well-defined social pyramid. At the top, the patricians, particularly members of the city council, dominated the political and social scene. Members of the council were usually prominent business persons. Newcomers found it difficult to break into this class. Prosperous foreigners, especially Dutch and Scottish immigrants who felt they had earned the right to join the ranks of the elite, gained access only after strong opposition. One of them, Michael Böhmen, was typical: in the 1640s, he invested in grain and timber, and buildings used in the trade industry, but mostly he provided working capital at various rates of interest.[69] Another important part of some portfolios was long-term lease of land that would be sublet to those who settled on it and raised crops and farm animals.

Much of the energy for planning and developing the city came from the middle class, especially the businessmen. Merchants bought grain and other products from suppliers up the Vistula River and then resold them for shipment to foreign ports. Profits of 30–40 percent were not unusual.[70] Imported goods brought a similar return for local merchants. At other times, perils of war and sea or unexpected shifts in the market might turn expected profits into total losses.

The large number of craftsmen and artisans was a very important element of the Danzig population. Sometimes, a street name suggested the vocation of persons living there. Thus, *Gerberstrasse* indicated that tanners lived along it, while *Webergasse* indicated the presence of weavers. Carpenters, cabinet-makers, saddlers, shoemakers, bakers, brewers, blacksmiths, and dozens of other tradesmen formed a vital part of the bustling city. Each group or guild had its own regulations that established stan-

dards and controlled access to the guild. Regulations might also address social concerns: the butchers' guild, for example, prohibited torture of animals to be slaughtered.[71]

Although standing below the guild members in status, skilled laborers and journeymen were by no means a silent, exploited part of the population. In 1591 journeymen in cabinet-making shops called a strike to protest unsatisfactory policies. Danzig guild records report a number of instances where journeymen working as assistants to carpenters, furniture-makers, basket-weavers, wood-carvers, and others went on strike. Sometimes strikers won concessions; on other occasions, the city council used its power to stop the strikes.[72]

Another important aspect of Danzig's economic life revolved around the considerable number of parcels of land the city owned. A legacy of the days when a Polish king, grateful for support against the Teutonic Knights had given land grants to centers such as Danzig and Elbing, these possessions provided additional income to the city. Some of this land lay on the outskirts of the city and could be rented to business persons, artisans, laborers, and others whose livelihood was connected to the economy of the city but who did not live within its walls. A far larger area, however, formed part of the delta and was subject to flooding. Such lands provided added income for the city only if competent settlers were to be found to make the land productive. As the refugees from the Netherlands moved into outlying areas and put their water engineering skills to work, they created a network of canals, drainage ditches, and windmills that turned marshes into productive grain and hay fields. Thus, they too contributed to the economic growth of the city.

Mennonites and Other Faith Communities

Mennonites faced fewer religious restrictions in some places along the Vistula River than in the delta. In Montau (Mątawy) for example, Mennonites were permitted to build their own church as early as 1586.[73] They were not, however, exempt from paying regular church dues to the local Catholic or Lutheran parishes, whether in the delta or up the Vistula River.[74] Diverse religious authorities had no uniform policy covering church matters. Local bishops might or might not grant permission

to build churches to members of various faiths. In many instances and for many years, Mennonites were not permitted to build churches at all. Church services were conducted in homes or in farm buildings. In other places, by the early 1600s Mennonites were permitted to build churches and have their own schools as they had done in Montau even earlier.

Such restrictions were by no means unique to Mennonite communities; Lutherans often shared similar religious restrictions and impositions. Christoph Hartknoch, an historian writing in 1686, noted that many of the Lutheran inhabitants of the Vistula Delta, especially in the Large Werder, were prohibited by Catholic authorities from building churches. Many villages had virtually empty Catholic churches while most of the local people, whether Lutheran or Mennonite, worshipped in homes.[75] As with the Mennonites, Lutherans had to continue making their financial contributions to the local Catholic parish church. Only gradually, and in the face of vigorous opposition, did these conditions change. Despite these and other restrictions, religious liberty in Royal Prussia was, by the standards of that time, extensive and remarkable.

Too often, Catholics are seen as the only agents of religious intolerance. A glance at Reformation Europe quickly demolishes such a misperception and shows that Protestants could also be avid champions of religious exclusion and control when they were in seats of power. When Lutherans gained control of the Danzig city council, they made a determined effort to exclude Calvinists not only from the council but also from use of any of the church buildings in the city. Only after Calvinists, mostly from Scotland and the Netherlands, had become a powerful economic force in Danzig did the city relent, and then only after vigorous protestations from the government of the Netherlands. Economic contributions were one thing; religious considerations were quite another. But whatever the dominant power, Catholic or Lutheran, *Sejm* or king, city council or local bishop, it was constrained by earlier leaders who had decreed, "Poland would not have a bloodbath such as had occurred in France."[76] The struggle for the minds of the people, as the Confederation of Warsaw insisted, would be waged with words and a variety of restrictive policies, but not with swords.

At the same time, this experiment in toleration remained under constant attack from those who were not prepared to grant freedom of expres-

sion to other religions. In fact, the goals of 1573 were narrowed somewhat by a variety of forces: the vigor of the Catholic Counter-Reformation; Protestant, especially Lutheran efforts to make that faith dominant in Royal Prussia; exclusion of Protestants from crown patronage; devastating Swedish military action in Poland in the 1650s; allegations of treason against those who supported the Swedish forces; and divisions within Protestantism. Then, in 1658, almost a century after it had charted a new course in religious liberty, the *Sejm* officially restricted its earlier toleration policy. Unitarians were given an option: either leave the country within three years (later reduced to two), or convert. Although the promise of 1573 was restricted, efforts to repeal the Confederation of Warsaw were rejected. It would remain the law of the land until the collapse of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century.[77] Even with the expulsion of Unitarians, Poland's record of toleration can still be favorably compared with treatment of nonconformists in most of Europe at that time.

Although the Confederation of Warsaw did not specifically mention Mennonites, the principle of toleration was generally extended to them, albeit at the discretion of the local authorities. Pursuant to this, ecclesiastical leaders occasionally examined the teachings of the Mennonites to see if they were sufficiently orthodox. In 1678 an episcopal commission came to Danzig to examine Mennonite teachings. Hendrick van Duhren, an elder of the Frisian Mennonite church in Danzig, and Georg Hansen, a minister in the Flemish Mennonite church in the city met with these ecclesiastical authorities. The sessions, however, were remarkably cordial.[78] No serious effort was made to put Mennonites in the same category as Unitarians. In several areas, as in beliefs concerning baptism, the differences with Catholics and Lutherans were substantial. At the same time, the questioners were pleased to hear that Mennonites did not regard the pope as antichrist. Van Duhren noted that Mennonites believed that Catholics could also be part of the family of God.[79] Three days later, Georg Hansen demonstrated that in issues relating to trinitarianism, Mennonite teaching was in harmony with historic creedal statements.[80] The historian Christof Hartknoch visited some Mennonite congregations in the region and reached the same conclusion.[81] In closing, the bishop conducting the examination in 1678 expressed satisfaction with Mennonite faith. Hansen later noted that the decision had been expedited by his giving the bishop a significant financial contribution.[82]

Throughout their time under the Polish crown, Mennonites in Royal Prussia were able to practice their faith and live in relative prosperity and peace. Sometimes they were denied full access to society, but they never felt the fires of persecution that had long threatened Mennonites in other parts of Europe. The new homeland on the banks of the Vistula, so movingly described by Joost van den Vondel, had become reality.

CHAPTER 2

A Legacy of Rivers & Dikes

The ancient historian Herodotus succinctly described the power of a river when he wrote, "Egypt is the gift of the Nile." Throughout time, rivers have shaped history: sometimes as sources of life-sustaining water, as arteries of trade and communication, and other times as release channels for excess water. So also the Vistula River shaped the lives of those who lived near it. Like Egypt, the Vistula Delta was a gift of the river. Over the millennia, its waters deposited silt, providing a rich, fertile soil. At the same time, seasonal increases in water flowing to the sea caused frequent flooding of the adjacent plains, making settlement hazardous.

Only as efforts were made to restrain the river by building dikes along its banks did significant settlement in the delta become feasible. It was the Teutonic Knights who first began serious efforts to keep the river within its boundaries so that large areas of the delta could be cultivated. There were several challenges. Since parts of the delta were at or below sea level, extensive drainage practices had to be developed. The river itself was subject to seasonal ebb and flow, so dikes and flood plains were essential. In addition to the main rivers, the Vistula and the Nogat, several smaller streams flowing through the area also needed to be controlled. Moreover, the Frisches Haff (Zalew Wiślany), the lagoon at the northeastern part of the delta, was subject to winds from the north that forced the water back

and flooded adjacent land. Over the centuries, an expansive network of dikes was built, and canals were dug both to facilitate the movement of excess water from arable land to streams and to provide means of transportation.

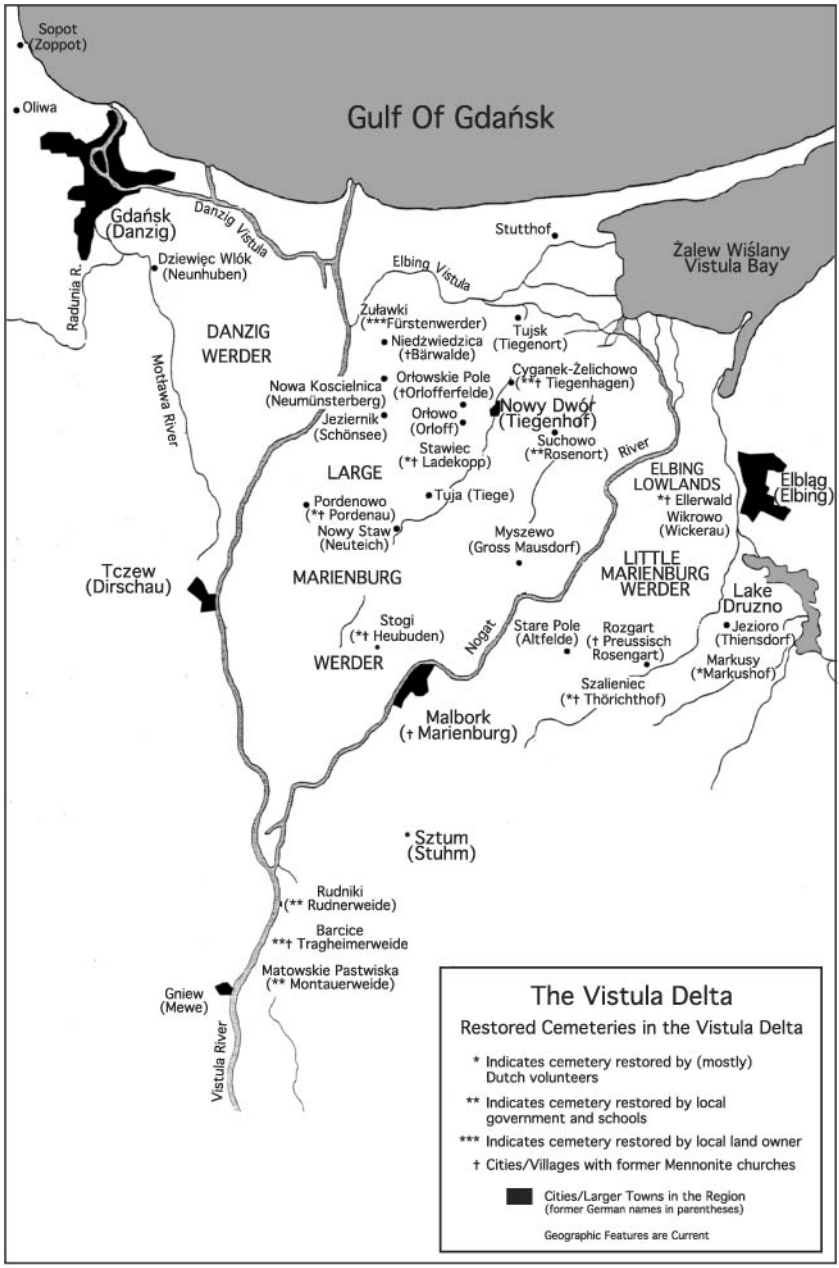
The Building of Dikes

To expand arable land in the Werder, the delta formed by the Vistula and Nogat Rivers as well as the smaller streams, dam and dike building was imperative. The earliest dikes, dating from medieval times, were simply long rows of piled-up earth. These were temporary and proved inadequate. Later, skilled technicians found ways to eliminate or reduce underground seepage and also to make them withstand the force of rising and running water.

Part of the system for building stronger dikes involved excavating a deep ditch on each side of the river.[1] Heavy clay was used to fill the ditch to provide a firm footing. Then a smaller clay dike was placed on the clay that filled the ditch, providing a core for the large dike. The visible aboveground dike was then formed, using available soil. Building dikes required much human labor as well as use of horse carts to transport the dirt. This represented a substantial investment of both time and capital.

Since prosperity in the lowlands was not possible without flood control, authorities had high interest in assuring that the dikes were properly maintained. For this purpose, dike watchmen (*Deichgeschworenen*) and a dike supervisor (*Deichgraf*) were appointed and solemnly charged with the responsibility of ensuring the proper maintenance of the dikes.[2] The size and extent of the delta required a number of such guardians of public property and safety. In addition, local farmers were responsible for controlling streams and maintaining bridges. These farmers could be summoned to repair or strengthen a dike at any time. All affected villages understood this responsibility because everyone knew that their livelihoods depended on strong, protective dikes. Paying for necessary maintenance and personally participating in the required labor were obligations shared by all.

The land that constituted the delta was divided into areas that were bounded by highlands and by the two major rivers:



Map of the Vistula Delta (drawn by Gail Enns). Mennonites helped to drain much of the marsh land and make it the "garden of Poland."

- Large Werder: the land between the Vistula and Nogat Rivers
- Danzig Werder: land between the Vistula and the highlands to the west
- Small Werder: lowlands between the Nogat and the highlands to the east
- Elbing Lowlands, including the Ellerwald, a marshy area just west of Elbing
- "Nehrung" or "spit," a narrow strip of land, between the Gulf of Danzig and the two branches of the Vistula River, one flowing into the gulf near Danzig, the other into the Frisches Haff, or lagoon.[3]

All of these lands were part of a very fertile, productive region that, when drained and developed, made the delta so lush and beautiful that visitors sometimes referred to it as the garden of Poland. A visitor to the area in 1570 wrote that former swamplands had been "drained and transformed into well-tended grain fields and pastures."[4]

The Coming of the Mennonites

Throughout trying times of war, Danzig had remained loyal to the king and had received land in the adjacent Werder as the king expressed his gratitude for military support in the defeat of the Teutonic Knights in 1454. Now the city wanted to find settlers who could bring productivity and prosperity to lands that lay desolate. An obvious source of such expertise lay in the Netherlands. At the same time, Danzig expressed concern that settlers coming from there might be infected with the Anabaptist "heresy."[5] The economic situation became even more desperate when renewed flooding of the Danzig Werder occurred in 1540 and 1543. A watery wasteland emerged between Danzig and the Vistula. A chronicler recorded the devastation: "Anno 1540 on February 22 the Vistula dike broke. . . . Many cattle drowned and the waters flowed all the way into Danzig, all the way to the fish market. . . . One could go by boat from the storage granaries to the werder."[6] It is not surprising that the city council became anxious to find new settlers experienced in transforming swamps and flooded land into productive farms.

In 1547, the city sent the emissary Philip Edzema to the Netherlands to find settlers. In return, he received the devastated village of Reichen-

Vistula River and dike. The mighty river, once Poland's main artery of trade, sometimes broke its dikes and devastated the countryside.

berg, situated in one of the lowest parts of the Werder. Undaunted, he accepted the challenge and brought settlers from the Netherlands. The Danzig city council stipulated that the settlers would be expected to drain the lowlands through skillful use of drainage techniques. They were to build windmills, dig drainage channels, and maintain proper water levels without injury to nearby lands. In return, they could have local self-government, would be required to pay only reasonable dues, and would have rights of inheritance. They were assured that their rights would be maintained "forever."[7]

During the 1540s and 1550s, Mennonite teachings had continued to spread in the Netherlands, even though imperial and Spanish authorities were determined to crush the movement. One Mennonite gave some indication of the growth of this faith when he reported in 1544 that he had had 600 copies of Menno's writings printed in Antwerp.[8] This man's subsequent death, and the deaths of hundreds of others of like faith, is evidence of the ferocity of the action taken by Spanish overlords and their local officials to rid the land of heresy. As persecution of the Anabaptist-

Mennonites continued, virtually all of them in the southern part of the Netherlands fled, were imprisoned, or killed. For those in flight, the lands along the Vistula provided a new opportunity. A Lutheran minister in the Vistula Delta described the demographic changes caused by Philip II's policies: "Many [Mennonites] fled from the Netherlands because of fear and settled in Prussia."[9] The result was that the delta had some Lutheran and Catholic settlers, a few Reformed, "but many Mennonites."[10]

Since many of these Mennonites came from the Netherlands, and Dutch skill in reclaiming land from the sea was widely known and admired, it is not surprising that they were welcomed as persons who would be able to restore the land to productivity. Other entrepreneurs also came to the aid of persecuted Mennonites, whether in the Netherlands or elsewhere. On one occasion, Mennonites fleeing religious persecution in the duchy of East Prussia were settled in the desolate villages of Scharfenberg (Bystra) and Landau (Lędowo) in the delta. Local authorities were accommodating to the new settlers and wanted to ensure success of these ventures.

Such settlers were freed from personal services to the landlord and were given self-government for their villages. In one instance, five villages that had been largely destroyed and had become desolate were given to Mennonites. The project proved successful as the newcomers dug drainage ditches and constructed dikes. By 1555, the city council noted that the income from the villages had increased sevenfold.[11] Soggy marshlands had been transformed into lush pastures and arable land, drained by canals and windmills. Farmhouses—some simple, others more elaborate—created a sense of tranquility, stability, and relative prosperity.

The Perils of Success

The success of Mennonite farmers often aroused envy and hostility among earlier settlers. However, landlords, whether city councils, bishops, abbots, nobles, or other influential persons, repeatedly came to their rescue. Mennonite settlers in the Danzig Werder were subjected to harsh criticism because of their religion but found staunch champions within the city council. Lutheran and Catholic city councilors were prepared to tolerate moderate heresy, provided the settlers made their regular lease payments. A pattern that developed in the 1550s became a model for later disputes encountered elsewhere. In this instance, some prior settlers complained to

King Sigismund II Augustus that the Danzig city council was giving their land to newcomers from the Netherlands, thus depriving earlier settlers of their income. The city council vigorously defended their policy of bringing in Mennonites:

> Villages [in the Danzig Werder] that used to have 15, 16 or 20 farmers before the flooding now have few or none at all. One can imagine the financial loss to Your Majesty's city of Danzig as the income declined. When the administrators of this area urged the remaining farmers to take better care of dikes and drainage channels, they encountered resistance, as well as refusal to carry out the necessary maintenance. . . . When we saw our efforts were fruitless, some people from the Netherlands, as though guided by fate, came to us and offered their help. To these persons we offered the deserted lands of the low-lying village of Landau and asked them to restore it at no cost to us. For this, we offered them four years with no payment to us. . . . These Netherlanders, gracious king, in short time have created wonderful drained land, so that instead of the desolate acres we now have 27 rent-paying farms. The new settlers have increased our annual income from 39 marks to 108 marks. We have recognized the outstanding industry and skilled planning . . . of these Netherlanders and have taken them into the ranks of regular farmers.[12]

The city council then buttressed its position by detailing how similar developments in nearby villages, such as Reichenberg, Schmerblock (Błotnik), Käsemark, Scharfenberg, and Weslinke (Wiślinka), had increased annual income from 91 marks to 768 marks. In addition, earlier settlers were permitted to stay if they were prepared to participate fully in the reclaiming of the desolate land and if they would join the Netherlanders in carrying out the necessary work. The city council concluded its message to the king by asserting once again that it was confident the royal court would be more influenced by a policy that had restored the Danzig Werder to "reasonable productivity" than by "unjust allegations born mainly out of envy." Moreover, surely those who had restored the Danzig Werder to income-producing farms were rightfully entitled to share in the fruits of their labor. The confident tone of the city may also have been strengthened by the fact that the villages mentioned were in the Danzig Werder, thus in *Stadtgebiet* (city lands).

Windmill near Wikrowo. The countryside was once dotted with mills for moving water and grinding grain. One of the last in the delta, this one burned in 2002.

Challenges from Other Quarters

Others soon joined the earliest Mennonite settlers, and the process of reclaiming desolate villages continued, thus increasing the income to the city. Windmills dotted the countryside. While economic recovery pleased the city, it did not remove all problems. The city itself was still in the middle of religious transition. Lutheranism was gaining ground and eventually emerged dominant, but Catholics continued to be an important part of

the population and retained control of many parishes and monasteries. At the same time, Calvinism was making inroads, especially in cities such as Danzig and Elbing. It gained new prominence later when the elector of Brandenburg, John Sigismund, adopted the Calvinist faith in 1613.

Religious policies of various governments did not always remain constant. Indeed, city councils could and did sometimes adopt more restrictive measures. Similarly, both crown and church administrators had considerable flexibility in religious matters so that degrees of toleration varied. Faced with growing religious challenges, the Danzig city council sometimes tried to prevent the growth of "heresy," but its efforts were erratic. Furthermore, the definition of the term itself was imprecise: for a time, Danzig Lutherans tried to include Calvinists in that category. In 1571 a directive issued by the city council stipulated that all those living in the Danzig Werder were to attend church regularly on Sundays and holy days and were to have infants baptized within three days after birth. King Sigismund II Augustus reinforced the council's demand shortly thereafter when, on 19 December 1571, he issued a mandate forbidding Mennonites to practice their faith.[13] The king died the following year, and this order was never enforced.

One complaint lodged with the city council was brought by Lutheran church leaders. The expansion of Mennonite land holdings effectively decreased land held by Lutherans and potentially also the income to the local Lutheran church. Tradition had long established a policy stipulating that owners of land within a parish had to pay a number of church dues. When Mennonites first arrived in the region, they usually settled on land that was in a Catholic parish and from which dues were paid to the local Catholic church. Mennonites were required to continue paying such church assessments. As Lutheranism spread, Mennonites also settled in parishes where both Catholic and Lutheran churches existed.

The issue of paying church assessments now became a contentious matter. The Catholic parish dues were usually maintained as original agreements stipulated. Lutherans, however, also wanted Mennonites to pay church dues, but Mennonites objected to this added financial obligation. Mennonites gained a partial reprieve when local authorities granted exemption from Lutheran church assessments on a temporary basis. But this was not a satisfactory situation from the standpoint of the Mennonites. In their quest for an equitable solution, Mennonite leaders presented a peti-

tion to the Danzig City Council: "We are subject to the ordained authority, and are dutifully obedient in all that is not contrary to the teachings of the Almighty, his word and command, or our conscience, for one is to obey God more than man."[14] However, they raised objections to paying both Catholic and Lutheran church levies. As a result, dues were retained for the traditional Catholic parish, while payments for Lutheran parishes, as a newer development, were temporarily suspended. Despite repeated Mennonite protests, and some "voluntary" donations to Lutheran parishes, mandated payment of Lutheran church dues did become the rule. Mennonites launched a legal battle to halt these payments for support of Lutheran churches, though not until the twentieth century were they successful.[15]

Issues of this sort continued to be part of Mennonite interaction with both civil and ecclesiastical authorities. However, landlords, including bishops and priors, or city councils, repeatedly championed limited toleration of Mennonites because they wanted good returns from their possessions. Furthermore, the Danzig council, reflecting frequent changes in the city's religious climate, did not have a consistent policy. Thus in 1552 it had made an agreement allowing Mennonites to observe their own faith. Then, thirty years later, the council again attempted, at least publicly, to enforce religious uniformity. However, religious uniformity evidently was not as important as additional financial gain, for during the ensuing negotiations, the council agreed to allow Mennonites to hold to their religion, providing they would increase their payments to the city. Thus, although some voices denounced the growth of "heresy" in the Danzig Werder and elsewhere, benefits derived from the Netherlanders' presence usually protected them from public denunciations.

Settlements in the Large Werder

While much of Western and Central Europe was torn by rival religious factions that often resorted to war, Mennonites from those regions looked eastward. In Poland, there was a large measure of toleration, as expressed in the Confederation of Warsaw. Total equality or total liberty did not exist, but the comparison with most of the rest of Europe was dramatically in Poland's favor.

The Large Werder, the land between the Vistula and Nogat Rivers,

eventually became home to the largest concentration of Mennonites anywhere in Royal Prussia, with an estimated 16.5 per cent of the population.[16] Most of the Large Werder was crown land, leased by the crown to a number of administrators who were granted royal concessions. One of the first large Mennonite settlements grew up around a village that became known as Tiegenhof. In the 1550s, Michael Loitz, a city councilor in Danzig and member of a wealthy family that owned a noted banking house, was given a thirty-year lease by the crown on land near the Tiege (Tuja) River. He had made numerous loans to King Sigismund II Augustus, and when the loans were not repaid, he was given emphyteutic tenure[17] of the village of Schönsee (Jeziernik) and surrounding land. Under emphyteutic tenure, leases were granted for an extended period of time, usually thirty or forty years, and were inheritable. Also, settlers were exempt from servile labor, even though serfdom was still common in many parts of Poland.

The *Orlofferfelde Chronik*, written by two ministers, Heinrich Donner and his son Johann, provides an informative account of how this land was transformed into productive farms. The Loitz brothers of the banking firm wanted to improve the condition of their unusable land and felt that the newcomers from the Netherlands were most capable of doing this. In 1562 they invited such Mennonites to transform swamps into fertile, productive farmland. This was accomplished by building dikes along the Haff, Drausensee (Lake Drużno), the lower Vistula and Nogat, as well as along the Tiege River. They also constructed windmills and dug drainage channels, making the swampy, unusable marshes arable.[18]

For several years, the Loitz family gave these Dutch Mennonites free use of the land and later emphyteutic leases. These leases were drawn up between the owner or administrator of the land, and a representative group of the settlers that constituted the village. For Mennonites, such arrangements fostered an already strong cooperative spirit and allowed them to function as a community with shared obligations and opportunities.

Unfortunately for the Loitz family, the king, Sigismund II Augustus, died in 1572 without having paid his debts. The Polish *Sejm* was soon caught up in a difficult succession quarrel and refused to accept responsibility for the royal debt. This default on the king's accumulated debt brought bankruptcy to the Loitz family. In 1575 a new king, Stefan

Dike and Tuja River. Canals and streams such as the Tuja provided essential drainage and transportation.

Bathory, gained the Polish crown and became involved in a power struggle with Danzig. When the proud city refused to bend to the king's will, a military confrontation resulted in which Danzig mercenaries fought the king's army. Neither side gained a clear victory, but Danzig agreed to pay homage to the king and swore allegiance to him. In turn, the king continued the traditional privileges of the city and also recognized Danzig's right to observe the Lutheran faith.

During the struggle, Ernst von Weiher, one of the king's commanders, distinguished himself. The king rewarded him by giving him the land that had been leased to the Loitz family and that was now home to many Mennonites. The new administrator demonstrated his control by canceling existing contracts and demanding initial payments from the Mennonite settlers. He then allowed them to acquire twenty-year leases. In 1601 the leases were extended for the more usual forty years.[19]

Despite the uncertain political situation, Mennonites continued to come to the region, and they established a series of new villages on reclaimed land. Among these were the following: Altendorf (Stara Wieś),

Haberhorst (Cyganek), Fischer-Neudorf, Orlofferfelde, Petershagenerfeld (Zelichowo Pole), Pietzendorf (Piecewo), Pletzendorf (Ploynik), Reimerswalde (Lesnowo), Siebenhuben, Stobbendorf (Stobiec), Klein Tiegenhagen, and Platenhof.[20] In addition, Tiegenhagen (Tujec), which had become wasteland, was restored to productivity. An existing contract from 1650 lists the names of the settlers.[21] Such agreements, covering several decades, often reflected careful forethought and planning. Provisions were made for loss of production in the event of war, fire, or flooding. In situations like these, "impartial persons" were to evaluate the damage or loss and make appropriate adjustments in payments. Such settlements depended largely on owners or administrators of the land involved. While regular payments to the landlord might be suspended, settlers were still expected to maintain financial support of schools and teachers. Other stipulations admonished settlers to make sure that stipulated payments to the local Catholic church and cemetery were maintained.[22]

The agreements made between Mennonite settlers and landowners show that the latter took a remarkably accommodating stance, since both parties benefited from these arrangements. Leases were regularly extended for forty years. As mentioned, when unexpected and destructive events occurred, regular dues were suspended. For example, since much of the Werder was ravaged by war during several decades of the seventeenth century, numerous villages were granted special monetary concessions.[23] In 1746 the village of Orlofferfelde was granted exemption from taxation for three years because of severe flooding.[24] Such practices continued for centuries and were common throughout the time when the area was under the Polish crown.

Lease agreements often specified that Mennonites were free to sell their wares "by water and on land, in cities, markets, as they wish."[25] The agreements also stipulated that the settlers would not be required to quarter troops or to perform work for the landlord. In the event that in the future a lease might not be extended, the farmers were to receive a fair and "impartial" evaluation of improvements, then be reimbursed accordingly. The farmers were required to maintain the local dikes, such as those of the Tiege River, but in the event of flooding, payments of rents would be forgiven for that year.[26] Similar lease arrangements were made with the various villagers in the vicinity. Individual farmers were listed for many of the villages, such as Tiegenhagen and Reimerswalde, and adaptations

Farm home. Many farm homes, such as this one, are now under historical preservation protection.

were made to reflect different situations. Sometimes, as in the middle of the seventeenth century, the ravages of war were so severe that villages were given a five-year exemption from paying dues.[27] Such concessions varied from area to area, depending on the owner or administrator as well as on the negotiating skills of village leaders. A standardized policy for Royal Prussia was never developed.

Despite generous economic concessions, religious dues in the Large Werder were another matter. Standard parish policies called for various payments to the local priest, but the delta lowlands became increasingly Lutheran and Mennonite. Mennonites tried repeatedly to be exempted from payments to either Catholic or Lutheran clergy, but the efforts were regularly rejected. Church dues remained a contentious matter. In addition, although villages founded by or dominated by Mennonites were allowed to establish their own schools, they were required to support the local school.[28] Support for schools was usually not a problem, but the expectation of contributing to the support of other churches, whether Lutheran or Catholic, was an obligation that Mennonites tried to avoid or minimize.[29]

Mennonites were also invited to settle in another area in the Large Werder, the *tenuta* (a parcel of leased land), Bärwalde (Niedzwiedzica). This land was also leased according to emphyteutic tenure. Usually, such agreements also provided for compensation if the lease had to be terminated. Farther to the east, the area known as the Scharpau (Szarpawa) was also made available to Mennonite settlers. This desolate marshland, owned by the city of Danzig, was at or below sea level. Once again, engineering techniques employing windmills, dikes, drainage channels, and horse-drawn carts created a fertile farming area. Again, a number of villages arose, among them Altebabke (Stare Babki), Scharpau, Beiershorst (Wybicko), Rehwalde (Pomorskie), and Jahnkendorf.

Such landholding arrangements continued throughout the time of Polish rule. The village of Tiegerweide (Tujskie Saki), for example, concluded an agreement set to expire in 1780. By that date the region was under the Prussian crown.[30] Nonetheless, traditional rights, including "free exercise of their religion" and exemption from quartering troops, were reaffirmed. As usual, the agreement stipulated payments to the local Lutheran minister and to the schoolmasters. The local administrator of the royal domain (*ekonomia*), however, was empowered to grant temporary exemption from regular dues in times of distress.

Other areas in the Large Werder also became important centers of Mennonite life. Heubuden, eventually the center of one of the largest Mennonite church communities, had Mennonite settlers by the middle of the sixteenth century.[31] This area had served as grazing land and had also produced hay for the horses used by the Teutonic Knights. With the defeat and expulsion of the Knights in 1466, the land remained underused until settlers came to establish farms there. The region was crown land, under the administration of a *starosta*, or governor. Early records indicate that Mennonites began to settle here in 1554 and established several villages that came to be known as "Hollander villages." The term did not necessarily mean that the village was settled by Mennonites, but rather that the earliest settlers came from the Netherlands or held their land under emphyteutic tenure as distinct from villages that were incorporated under the dominant law of Kulm. They resembled agricultural settlements in the Netherlands. For a time, the already-founded village of Kościeleczki, named for the governor of Marienburg Castle, served as a center of the immediate area, so a new village like Heubuden was often referred to as

Heubuden-Kościeleczki until it became known in its own right. New settlers also established other nearby villages, such as Altenau (Starynia), Damerau (Dąbrowa), and Barendt (Boręty), and the region became noted for its heavy concentration of Mennonites.

Lands East of the Nogat River

The city of Elbing dominated the eastern part of the Vistula Delta, a large part of which constituted territory owned by the city. Elbing was not only an important commercial center with significant international trade, but it also had numerous guilds that provided a broad variety of services and manufactured goods for export and use at home. The precise arrival date of the earliest Mennonites is difficult to establish, although Erich Keyser, one of the city's historians, suggests that they first arrived in the 1530s.[32] By 1550 the Mennonite competition among craftsmen had aroused enough opposition from the local guilds that they were able to convince the king and city to issue a decree ordering the expulsion of Mennonites from the city. This action gave opportunity to enterprising landholders in Elbing, whether Lutheran or Catholic, to take advantage of the situation and invite these Mennonites to come and settle in the suburbs outside the city or in the Ellerwald.[33]

Specifically, Elbing held a sizable tract of land between the city and the Nogat River. This swampy area lay immediately west of the city and had been divided among citizens of Elbing.[34] Concluding that the best way to benefit from their new possessions was to lease them to Mennonites who knew how to make the marshes productive, members of the city council and other citizens, including the 435 owners of Ellerwald land parcels, now offered many of these holdings to Mennonites.[35] The earliest Mennonite settlements in Ellerwald occurred soon after Elbing's expulsion decree in 1550.[36] It should be mentioned here that for another group of Mennonites, the expulsion order from Elbing virtually coincided with similar action taken in 1559 in Ducal Prussia to the east. There Duke Albert, following the urging of his spiritual advisor, the Lutheran Bishop Speratus, ordered Mennonites to leave his duchy just as he had expelled "Anabaptists" earlier.

Those who moved into the marshy Ellerwald accomplished one of the most noteworthy feats of Mennonite settlement in the delta. Here a rela-

tively large area lay unproductive and desolate. In short order, Mennonites established new villages with fertile landholdings. To distribute available land equitably, the new settlers drew lots to determine who should get which parcel of land. The acreage was divided into long strips, or *Triften*, separated by drainage channels to control the water level. As in many other areas where land lay at or below sea level, farmsteads often added extra drainage ditches. Furthermore, houses and barns were often built on artificially constructed mounds to place them on higher, safer ground.[37]

In the Ellerwald, the settlers were permitted to have their own local administrative procedures. Leases were established with annual fees and also included agreements stating that no personal services to the landlord were required. This was significant in a time when serfdom was still common in many parts of the Poland-Lithuania Commonwealth as well as in other parts of central and eastern Europe. At the time of the first partition, Mennonites held some 3,500 acres of the fertile land near Elbing.[38]

Early settlers there faced great difficulties. In 1577 when King Stefan Bathory brought an army to try to subdue Danzig, the king's soldiers pillaged some of this region and confiscated cattle to feed the army. Despite such harassment, the Mennonite settlement in the Ellerwald recovered and eventually became a prosperous community constituting one of the largest concentrations of Mennonites in the entire delta.

Mennonites who settled in the outskirts of Elbing—and sometimes within the city—developed their crafts and trades, to the chagrin of the city guilds. As a result of protests from disgruntled craftsmen, Elbing again in 1572 agreed that Mennonites should be expelled. After further deliberation, the city council decided that this policy of expulsion should be delayed so that Mennonites could harvest their crops. With that stipulation, the expulsion order was quietly allowed to lapse.[39]

In a remarkably short time this episode was forgotten, and Mennonites were invited to bring their business skills into the city, as in the case of Jost van Kampen and Hans von Cöln, who established a silk trade in Elbing in 1585. They must have made a very positive impression, for they became citizens in that same year.[40] They were also allowed to purchase land, and in 1586 they, together with some other Mennonites, purchased a city lot on the *Kurze Hintergasse*. On it they built a house which a few years later became the first city church of the local Mennonites.[41] The cemetery of the nearby Lutheran Church of St. Anne was made available to the Men-

nonites, with burial fees dependent on the age and status of the deceased, but a public ceremony at the burial site was forbidden.[42]

Settlement of Mennonites in this area was closely related to that in parts of the Little Werder, on the right side of the Nogat, east and northeast of Marienburg. Here, in the second half of the sixteenth century, Mennonites settled in abandoned villages and also established new ones. One of the earliest was Markushof (Markusy), where Mennonites reportedly arrived as early as 1566; but the village was formally founded only in 1590.[43] By 1584 the village of Campenau (Kępniewo) had been settled by Mennonites who had signed a twenty-year lease. When that expired, the term was extended to the more usual forty years. Other villages that formed part of this significant concentration of Mennonites included Alt Rosengart (Rożany), Sparrau, Rosenort (Jurandowo), Thiensdorf (Jezioro), Kuckuck (Kukulka), Schwansdorf (Zurawiec), and Eschenhorst (Jeżewo), all of them founded in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries.[44] Typical leases stipulated that settlers were free to market their grain and other farm products, to fish in local streams, to choose their own *Schulze*, or mayor, and to regulate their local affairs.

Reclaiming Land from the Drausensee and the Frisches Haff

Another settlement just south of Elbing grew up around the Drausensee, a large lake surrounded by swampy lands. Here Mennonites launched an ambitious land reclamation project by constructing a dam through the lake, erecting a number of windmills, and then draining the land west of the dam. Eventually, the lake was reduced to about one-fourth its original size and a number of villages arose in the former lake bottom.[45] It was also at this time that harsh repression drove a number of Hutterites from Moravia, and some found their way to the Wengeln (Węngle) area in the newly drained lands near the Drausensee.[46] Here they implemented their practice of communal living, but the venture, burdened with harsh local financial demands, failed. Efforts to join with the larger Mennonite community were also unsuccessful, so the Hutterites decided to return to Moravia and Bohemia, although a few apparently stayed and joined the Mennonites.[47]

Those who warned about the dangers of allowing Mennonites to settle in the region received little attention. Instead, the city council showed

Former Mennonite Church in Thiensdorf. Now empty, sometimes used for storage, this structure once served a thriving Mennonite congregation.

gratitude to those Mennonites who came to settle in Ellerwald, in the Drausensee area south of Elbing, and in the city itself. The city was pleased to have marshland—and, indeed, land below sea level—brought under cultivation. Here also, skilled water engineering techniques restrained the Drausensee and allowed the new settlers to farm land that was well below the level of the adjacent lake.

Settlement on low-lying land continued, so that villages such as Kerbswalde (Karczowiska Górne) and Aschbuden (Szopy) arose. Although Mennonites constituted a significant number of the settlers, members of other faiths were also free to settle here.[48] Other parcels of land, previously used for grazing, such as the Scharpau, directly west of the lagoon, also posed serious challenges because much of the land was below sea level, with streams flowing through it. Here Mennonite settlers built dikes and channels to control the streams and provide drainage, erected a series of windmills to lift the water in stages to flow into the lagoon, and constructed strong dams to contain the lagoon's waters. Sometimes the Archimedes screw was used to raise the water to the necessary heights. This

technique was apparently first demonstrated in these lowlands by Adam Wiebe, a Dutch Mennonite engineer from Harlingen.[49]

Challenges and Support from Religious and Secular Authorities

As Mennonites continued to settle in more and more villages in the Vistula Delta and to establish centers of worship, it is hardly surprising that some local leaders expressed opposition. Repeatedly, however, when Mennonites had detractors, they also had defenders. Thus, when the Bishop of Kulm in 1608 urged members of the *sejmik* (regional diet) meeting in Graudenz (Grudziądz) to take action to stop the coming of Mennonites, an impressive array of representatives from Danzig, Thorn, Elbing, and Marienburg defended the Mennonites.[50] Nonetheless, positions of cities and leaders could easily change as new circumstances arose.

This was true of both religious and secular officials. Although there never was a broad, united movement that called for expulsion of Mennonites, authority figures such as the bishop of Warmia never seemed to waiver in his opposition to them. Sometimes political leaders supported him. Such an alliance was seldom significant, but continued to be a factor. Thus, in 1696 the deputy governor of Pomerelia suggested that at least all Arians should be banned and that Mennonites should be regarded as Arians.[51] When some members of the nobility objected, the deputy governor recommended adopting a statement that would declare such nobles to be Mennonites. The proposal was not taken seriously.

Community Mutual Assistance in Times of Need

In a region where flooding was a frequent concern, security depended on the vigilance of the whole community. Dikes were never far away, and settlers regularly examined these guardians against the rivers. Even so, high water did break through the dikes at times, creating havoc among the farmers. At least for Mennonites, in times of distress the religious connections with churches in the Netherlands led to significant assistance.

The introduction of fire insurance added another form of protection in the face of unexpected loss. This resource against loss varied from community to community and from region to region. Local initiative and the will-

ingness to adopt policies developed by the cooperation of many villages was a deciding factor. Thus, in 1622 the Danzig City Council approved an arrangement whereby Mennonite farmers in the Little Werder could form an association for mutual assistance in the event of loss by fire.[52] Similarly, on 29 May 1623, farmers in the area of Tiegenhof formed a fire insurance association, which was formally recognized on 26 February 1624. Its membership was drawn from the villages of Tiegenhagen, Platenhof, Reimerswalde, Petershagen, Pletzendorf, Altendorf, Stobbendorf, Haberhorst, and some others. It was designed as a "Christian and praiseworthy" endeavor so that those who lost possessions through fire might have a "deserved hand" extended to them. It must have served its members well, for it existed until World War II.[53]

A Remarkable Stability in Land Tenure

For four centuries the Vistula Delta remained a homeland of Mennonites. Flooding, fires, and the ravages of war posed major challenges, but united approaches by local communities, strengthened by a generally supportive and tolerant political and economic structure, allowed Mennonites here to flourish throughout the Polish period and then also during the time of Prussian rule.[54]

During the time when Mennonites in Royal Prussia lived under the Polish crown, they enjoyed a very predictable land tenure policy as expressed in regular and numerous agreements. Many of these contracts between villages and civil authorities still exist in a number of archival centers, especially in Gdańsk. Some of the earliest ones drawn up in the sixteenth century no longer exist but are mentioned in later agreements. Frequently, names of villagers are given. The terms specified include financial and in-kind obligations. Land was usually held in emphyteutic tenure: long-term leases, usually thirty or forty years, with rights of inheritance, stated obligations and specified payments to the administrator leasing this land to Mennonite farmers. Often, especially when the land was owned by a bishop, there were religious conditions, and these varied from diocese to diocese, and from bishop to bishop.

A few illustrations taken from documents specifying rights and obligations of some villages are typical of customary procedures. For the village of Markushof, where Mennonites arrived two decades earlier, a govern-

ment statement concerning local administrative policies is dated 1588,[55] while a document outlining village obligations to the landlord is dated much later, in 1636. A wide array of agreed-upon conditions is outlined in a lease dated 1612 for the village of Campenau, established almost thirty years earlier.[56] There are similar documents for Heubuden dated 1635.[57] Dozens of such agreements as well as government documents outlining civil procedures are preserved in a number of archives. Standard features were the emphasis on a large measure of local autonomy, strong continuity, virtually automatic renewal, and the assurance of concessions in the event of unusual distress, such as war, flooding, or fire.

Over the decades—indeed, centuries—Mennonites in the Vistula Delta established strong religious communities. At the same time, they knew they were part of a much larger economic, social, and political body whose members came from various religious and social groups. All of them knew that their fortunes were intertwined and also that they were strongly connected to the rivers and streams that were simultaneously both a lifeline and a potential threat. In that context, Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, Mennonites, and others shared destinies that were inseparable. Poland's mighty river determined that in matters of land and water no religious or social body could be an island unto itself.

CHAPTER 3

The Challenges of Urban Settings

Early modern Danzig, proud and prosperous, exerted a powerful influence far beyond its immediate environs. This status is evident in the way Danzig's city council dealt with requests from nations of other religious persuasions. Even after Lutheran teachings gained a dominant position in the city, strong ties with the Catholic Church continued.[1] Churches of a number of monastic orders remained Catholic; parish churches became Lutheran. Relations among the city council, ecclesiastical leaders, and the crown were often tense and never unimportant.

When, largely because of Danzig's trading connections with the Netherlands, England, and Scotland, the Reformed movement tried to establish its independent congregations within the city, the council quickly sensed the potential challenge to its authority. In 1612, it declared that these newcomers would not be allowed to hold any administrative offices in the city.[2] When the council also resisted giving the Reformed one of the numerous churches in the city, King Sigismund III intervened and demanded that the Church of the Holy Trinity be made available to adherents of the Reformed confession.[3] The council agreed, but it is worth noting that the States General of the Netherlands was fully prepared to intervene if it felt that adherents of the Reformed faith, often Dutch, were being treated unfairly.[4] Because Danzig conducted far more trade with Amsterdam than with any other trading center, it is not surprising that a request from the Netherlands was accorded high priority.

Such incidents also demonstrate that Danzig, having won the right to conduct its own international affairs, regarded itself fully the equal when dealing with foreign cities and capitals. Nor did the city fathers hesitate to take a firm position if they felt a foreign country was trying to exercise undue influence on Danzig's internal affairs. When the States General of the Netherlands urged Danzig to make another church available to adherents of the Reformed position, the city council refused, noting that the Reformed already had a church in that vicinity, and since the Lutherans did not, they should have the one under question. In view of Danzig's strong economic ties to Amsterdam, the reply indicated a measure of confidence and civic pride that could resist external pressure.[5] Both in Poland and on the international scene, Danzig demonstrated a self-assurance that other cities envied. Similarly, as an influential member of the Hansa, the city helped to shape international commercial policies.

The strong commercial ties between Danzig and the Netherlands, as well as the economic, especially agricultural opportunities provided by conditions in the Vistula Delta, presented attractive opportunities for Mennonites being persecuted in numerous parts of Europe. At the same time, the negative public opinion generated by some radical movements raised concerns about the coming of religious nonconformists. Even before Mennonites began coming to Danzig, authorities issued warnings and protests regarding Anabaptists coming from the Netherlands to Royal Prussia and warned of "the error and teaching of the Anabaptists."[6] At the same time, Anabaptists in Ducal Prussia were threatened with "loss of life and property."[7] The savage persecution of Anabaptists, especially in the Netherlands and northern parts of Germany, as depicted in *The Martyrs Mirror*, explains why so many were willing to hazard a voyage in hope of finding a new home.

The lively trade between Danzig and numerous Dutch and other North European cities provided the possibility for settling in the Vistula Delta. Carriage traffic also provided an opportunity to move to another area. Existing records do not clearly show when Mennonites first came to Danzig and its environs, but a letter from Menno Simons to his fellow-believers in "the land of Prussia" in 1549 indicates that he had visited the area in the previous summer and had addressed some pastoral concerns in the congregation.[8] Thus, it seems evident that at least by the 1540s, an organized congregation existed in the region.

Gdańsk Long Market was Royal Prussia's commercial and administrative center.

Mennonites who came to Danzig and the surrounding areas represented both the Flemish and Frisian wing of the movement. Both groups established congregations here, and after almost a century, eventually built their own churches. The congregations were not recognized as official churches, however, so individual persons purchased land on which the two groups built their houses of worship.[9]

As Mennonite communities arose in the Danzig suburbs and elsewhere, they were often seen as groups with distinctives that separated them from society at large. Some historians have written about the "self-isolation of the Mennonite congregations,"[10] suggesting that Mennonites deliberately fostered practices that formed barriers between them and the rest of society. In the arena of faith this charge had some justification, for Mennonites rejected infant baptism and held that only those who had chosen the Christian faith should be baptized. In many countries, laws of the land prescribed the death penalty for such a view. However, Mennonites were frequently rebuffed when they attempted to become part of

the social and economic communities that surrounded them. In Danzig they were barred from citizenship when they maintained their pacifism. Similarly, they were excluded from guilds that dominated the crafts and professions. Despite these barriers, Mennonites often looked for ways to be fully integrated into their world, including gaining citizenship. Mennonites insisted on having their own congregations, not because they wanted isolation, but because they held beliefs that differed from those of other Protestants. Even so, Mennonites participated in the commerce and life of Danzig and pursued trades and professions that brought them into regular contact, and often competition, with the population at large. Similar patterns developed in the rural settings, where Mennonites often lived in villages in which Lutherans and Catholics predominated, and Mennonite children often attended schools with Catholic or Lutheran teachers. Nonetheless, in view of widespread discrimination in European society, it seems clear that Mennonites in many parts of Royal Prussia enjoyed a relatively large measure of integration and acceptance.

Early Mennonite craftsmen who wished to settle in or near Danzig found a remarkable openness on the part of the local Catholic hierarchy. Evidently bishops, abbots, and others were ready to enhance the income from their lands by leasing them to the newcomers from the Netherlands. The bishop of Włocławek (Leslau) owned land in Alt Schottland and Bischofsberg (Biskupia Górka) west of the city walls and allowed Mennonites to settle on his land.[11] Similarly, the abbot of Pelplin, who held Hoppenbruch (Chmielniki) near the city, permitted Mennonites to lease land from him. Likewise, in nearby Schidlitz (Siedlce), where St. Bridget's cloister leased land from the city, the prioress now sublet land to Mennonite craftsmen. Some nearby land was also leased from the Oliva cloister, and in the city suburb of Langfuhr (Wrzeszcz), from the nobility.[12] The episcopally owned village of St. Albrecht in the nearby Danzig highlands also became home to a number of Mennonite craftsmen.[13] Although the bishop in the neighboring diocese of Warmia gave strict orders not to admit any Anabaptists into his see, other members of the regional Catholic hierarchy allowed them to settle on their lands.

The settlements just outside the city wall, as well as those in the Danzig highlands, soon became bustling centers of crafts and trade. Weavers, tailors, bakers, tanners, brewers, shoemakers, metalworkers, and other craftsmen as well as merchants became so successful that they emerged as

Pelplin Abbot's residence. Like many other church officials, the Pelplin abbot leased land to Mennonites.

strong competitors for the members of guilds in the city. When the guilds attempted to curtail weaving in the Mennonite communities, political and religious leaders came to their defense. Frequently, the city council, seeking to curb the political ambitions of the "third estate," composed of guilds and craftsmen, defended the Mennonite weavers. Similarly, Catholic authorities were pleased with the increased financial returns they received from their lands. Furthermore, they had no desire to strengthen Lutheran control of the regional economy or religious structures, so they often defended the Mennonites.

The Power of Lace

Mennonite settlers on the outskirts of Danzig and in the neighboring highlands brought with them skills that allowed them to compete with numerous craft and merchant guild members. Very quickly, however, citizens of the city began to realize that the new settlers were providing too much competition. The immigrants from the Netherlands also brought skills such as lace and braid making, which were new to Danzig. Members of guilds moved quickly to master such crafts themselves, and by the 1560s, they began to lodge complaints with the city council, charging that the Dutch Mennonites were taking too much of the market.[14] When the city council suggested that Mennonites might become citizens so that they could become guild members, since only citizens could join the guilds, the guilds rejected the proposal. The guilds already felt challenged by other Dutch immigrants[15] as well as by Scots,[16] many of whom adhered to the Reformed faith and therefore could become citizens as well as guild members. Mennonites protested that they did not wish to infringe on the livelihood of guild members but did need to earn a living. No ready resolution could be found.

Disputes about who had the right to engage in specific crafts caused friction for decades. Various efforts at resolution would provide a measure of mutual acceptance, but when economic difficulties arose, the dispute would emerge again. During much of this period, the guilds raised numerous objections whenever solutions or modifications of current policies were proposed that might bring full acceptance of Mennonites. Sometimes church officials reminded the city that only adherents of the three officially sanctioned confessions—Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed—could be citizens, and since only citizens were admitted to guilds, this effectively barred Mennonites. At other times, additional taxes for Mennonites were suggested, but then Mennonites charged unfair practices were being used against them. Usually, appeals to the city council or the royal court affirmed the traditional rights of Mennonites. Similarly, calls for expulsion of Mennonites gained little support.

From 1644 to 1649, Mennonites and merchants of the city brought a series of charges and countercharges in which Mennonites resisted efforts to restrict the quantity of goods they might sell and the places where sales could occur. Mennonites defended their established practices and

appealed to the royal court.[17] When the dispute continued, King John III suggested that the city council might want to impose an added tax on Mennonites trading in the city.[18]

Often Mennonites gained support in the city council, largely because of the income their businesses and crafts generated. By the middle of the seventeenth century, Mennonites played a significant role in the city's financial affairs because of their involvement in banking and lending ventures. Again, this enriched the city coffers but did little to assuage aggrieved members of guilds.[19] At times the city council tried to be more conciliatory toward the guilds. Thus it passed a measure designed to restrict Mennonite trade by stipulating that Mennonite lace-weavers should buy their materials only from local merchants. This ensured that citizens would secure at least some benefits from Mennonite industry. In addition, goods produced by Mennonites were to be sold through local city merchants.[20]

Repeatedly, Mennonites found that the king was more generously disposed toward them than many government officials or members of the guilds. The "Swedish Deluge" brought Swedish soldiers to Danzig and its surroundings in repeated waves during much of the Thirty Years War, and many Mennonite homes were destroyed. These incursions by Gustavus Adolphus were soon followed by the armies of Charles X. For villages outside the city walls, the wars were especially devastating, for defenders of Danzig successfully urged adopting a scorched earth policy so that enemies would be deprived of shelter and hiding. The Mennonite churches here were also destroyed, although they were later rebuilt.

Some of the invaders expressed surprise that a predominantly Lutheran city such as Danzig would not join the Swedish forces, but the city's Lutheran ministers instead denounced "Swedish slavery" and the "hated Swedes."[21] Successful resistance to the Swedish attack gave birth to a spate of poems and panegyrical broadsides belittling other cities that had yielded to the Swedes while Danzig had remained loyal to its king. Pamphleteers hailed the Danzig victory as a triumph of "freedom and justice."[22] Finally, in 1660, the Peace of Oliva provided at least a temporary respite for the war-weary land. Danzig had demonstrated that it valued its freedom more than what any temporary alliance with an invader might offer. No concessions were made to the Swedish king, even though he attempted to gain Danzig's neutrality.[23] When peace had been restored, the Polish king insisted that the city help rebuild the homes of villagers

Leopold deß Himels Wonne/ Leopold der Erden Sonne/
Leopold der Teutschen Zier/ Leb' vnd herrsche für vnd für!

Jß ist der Friedens-Fürst/ der Teutschen Grosse Kayser/
Das höchstgekrönte Haupt in aller Königs-Häuser/
Die gantze Welt/ hat der zu Ruh gebracht/
Verwundre wunder dich! vnd alles Eins gemacht.
Man sahe Saiten mit Cymbe klagen/klagen/
Man höre in dem Belt/ Car gigel schlagen/
Der Edel Preuß verschmacht durch schnelle Pulvers macht/
Deß Feuermörsner Krafft/in Possern donnert/kracht/
Der tapfferen Norden Macht/ward gantz vnd gar betreget/
Der schöne Düna Fluß mit Rußen Volck beleget/
Die grosse Christenwelt erbleicht ob dieser Flut/
Nichts anders sihet Hier/ dort/ als Grimm erzürnte Glut!
In der Bestürtzungs-noth/ der Herrscher/HErr der Ehren/
Der unverändert GOtt/ die Friedenstimm last Hören/
Ost/Westen/Süd vnd Nord/mit freuden Frieden singt/
Die jauchtzend Jubeltimm/hoch an die Wolcken klingt;

GOtt wunderbarer GOtt! sey ewig hoch gepreiset/
Erlöser der in Angst/ Hülffmächtig sich erweiset/
Hoch-heilig ist dein Nam/ dein Herrlich- echte Hand/
Schweigt aller Völcker Angst/ gibt Frieden a.em Land.
Dein ewig-hoher Geist/ die Hertzen hat gerühret/
Gleich wie die Wasserfirdin/ Zung/Augen/ Sinn regieret
Der Götter diser Erd/ die in deß Herren Krafft/
Den Fürsten Thron vnd Cron/Europæ Ruh geschafft.
Erschrecke wilder Hund/ Rauß/Tartar/Dieß! erzittre
Du rauhes Parther Land/ dich Asien erschüttre!
Dem grossen LEOPOLD/ der Himmel sichet bey/
Europa sitzt im Fried/ GOtt rächt dein Tyranney!
Daß unter disem Thron mit Kettenzwang beschweret/
Du ligen muß entblößt/ geplagt/ genagt/ verzehret/
GOtt geb dem Keyser Glück zu diser vnser Zeit/
Den Friedenstiffter schütz der Gott der Einigkeit. G.P.R.is.

Illustration of the Peace Tree (Library, Polish Academy of Sciences, Gdańsk). In 1660 the Peace of Oliva ended a devastating war and brought relief to the Vistula Delta. Here rulers celebrate a peace that was short-lived.

whose possessions had been destroyed as a defensive measure. Mennonites shared in this restorative project.[24]

Early in the eighteenth century, Danzig was facing especially serious economic problems, and the guilds tried desperately to alleviate their distress. Some Mennonite weavers and other craftsmen actually decided to move to the Netherlands and practice their skills there.[25] Economic problems were so serious that the king of Poland, who was also the king of Saxony, was ready to consider new tactics. At first he seemed conciliatory toward Mennonites, and in 1748 he issued a decree confirming their regular privileges.[26] Soon, however, the king realized that the dispute in Danzig was grave; if he could gain the favor of the guilds, he might manipulate the situation to his own advantage and enhance his control over the city.

The guilds, using their influence as part of the third estate, charged that wealthy Mennonites were able to make trade arrangements that others could not afford. When the king hesitated to act against the Mennonites, the third estate withheld its tax payments. The king now appointed Adam Grabowski, bishop of Warmia and an outspoken opponent of "heretics," along with Privy Councilor Anton von Leibnitz as royal commissioners to investigate the dispute. The commission recommended several measures to address the complaints. These included imposing additional taxes on Mennonites, rescinding special privileges granted them, asking city authorities to present an accounting of what had been done with monies paid by Mennonites for their freedoms, and taking steps to prevent further Mennonite acquisition of land or buildings within the city.[27] The city council responded by questioning some of the recommendations and quickly drew a sharp denunciation from representatives of the guilds.

The guilds, determined to appeal to public opinion, launched a campaign in which they charged Mennonites with a variety of practices that were detrimental to the public good. These included the curious allegation that they had ugly church buildings.[28] This was especially puzzling since there was an episcopal directive stipulating that Mennonite churches should resemble houses, not churches. Mennonites were also said to be disdainful of "other Christian religions." Mennonites insisted that they had carefully observed agreements with city councils and also had royal confirmation of privileges granted by virtually all monarchs of the past century. Opponents retorted that royal privileges could often be obtained

by making financial contributions to the royal treasury. Mennonites responded by issuing protests against the allegations and restrictions.

The Power of Commerce

During this time of confrontation, Mennonites could count on the support of the Dutch government. Through its representative in Danzig, the Dutch government sent a memorandum to Danzig, expressing concern about the way in which Mennonites were being treated. Danzig Mennonites also appealed to their fellow believers in the Netherlands.[29] The situation became rather delicate since Amsterdam had long had a cordial relationship with its partner on the Baltic. Thus, by the middle of the eighteenth century, the Danzig council had the unpleasant task of dealing with a major trading partner, and one to whom the city was heavily indebted. It was not, of course, the first time that Mennonites in Royal Prussia had received support from the States General in the Netherlands. For the immediate future, added financial assessments on Mennonites were suspended. Pressure from the guilds, however, continued to mount.

An overview of trades, handicrafts, and businesses of Mennonites who lived on land close to the city, much of it owned by the city, provides insight into the economic status of the Mennonite community.[30] Economic and political conditions in the city often fluctuated, especially when Danzig and its suburbs were caught up in international power struggles that adversely affected the city's trade and productivity. Sources suggest that the Mennonite population in the city and its suburbs never exceeded 1,500 persons and was often less.[31] In 1681, the number of families dependent on these trades and occupations was listed as 113. By 1776, a similar overview listed the number of families at 122, numbering 563 persons. In addition, at least 22 families had left Danzig for Königsberg during the intense confrontations from 1749 to 1752.[32] At the same time, some wealthy Mennonites found ways to circumvent restrictions on buying houses in the city. They simply executed long-term leases with owners who were happy to have an added source of income.[33] Few objections were raised, for the city had no desire to jeopardize its income from prominent and flourishing commercial firms or successful and prosperous businesspersons.

In response to the business success of a number of Mennonites, many guild members and craftsmen were determined to find some means whereby they might improve their own economic condition. Getting rid of competition promised at least the possibility of improved returns for guild production. Tactics to discredit Mennonites illustrated the extent to which opponents would go. Champions of the guilds distributed a number of anti-Mennonite pamphlets. One of these diatribes reiterated the charge that Mennonites were nothing more than a newer version of the followers of Jan of Leyden. Another inflammatory broadside alleged that Mennonites were given preferential treatment by financial concerns in the Netherlands, and that some honest citizens in Danzig were being reduced to the level of slaves.[34] Such allegations were not without merit, for Mennonites in the Netherlands had a long tradition of coming to the aid of needy Mennonites in Royal Prussia.

Other voices, however, defended the Mennonites. The merchant Sigismund Rehfel contended that the city would prosper if it granted greater freedom and more rights to Mennonites, for in the past they had introduced industries that had brought profit to the city. He contended that the economic restrictions proposed by the guilds would be detrimental to the city's economic health.[35]

In the end, however, a king who wanted more control over the city council and greater support from the guilds and the general populace decreed that many of the special "privileges" granted Mennonites were annulled.[36] King Augustus III decided to sacrifice a religious minority to gain support of the guilds. A temporary exception was made in the case of lace-makers, who were permitted to continue to practice their handicraft for the rest of their lives; however, Mennonite apprentices were not to be admitted to the lace-makers' guild. The king's ordinance also imposed restrictions and prohibitions on Jews.[37] Some citizens of Danzig, however, questioned the king's actions. After King Augustus III issued his decree limiting traditional rights of Mennonites, Gottfried Lengnich, historian, lawyer, professor in the local Gymnasium and ardent defender of Danzig's privileges, noted the irony: Mennonites had introduced a specialty craft into Danzig, and now the city was moving to bar them from practicing this skill.[38] Later Polish historians, such as Maria Bogucka, have demonstrated the significance of the introduction of lace making in Danzig.[39] The guilds, however, demonstrated their gratitude to the king by erecting a monu-

ment in his honor.[40] For the city's political leadership, efforts to expand royal influence in the city remained a source of friction and unease.

Some Mennonite merchants and craftsmen left the city and moved to a more accommodating environment such as Königsberg, which with the accession of Frederick II in 1740, had become very open to Mennonites.[41] On the other hand, numerous other merchants stayed in Danzig and established themselves in a variety of commercial ventures. Jacob and Dirk Bestvater, for example, owned fifty cargo ships and became respected business leaders.[42] From early days of Mennonite settlement in the Danzig vicinity, the Vermeulen family played an important role in Danzig business. In 1598, Ambrosius Vermeulen founded the distillery Zum Lachs, where "Goldwasser" liqueur, with its floating flecks of gold, became famous.[43] His business achievements apparently earned him acceptance as a citizen of Danzig, even though Mennonites were usually barred from such recognition.[44] This profitable firm remained in Mennonite hands for some two centuries and also established a restaurant that still exists. In 1748, Dirk Hekker, the Mennonite who had become the owner of Zum Lachs, reported that his firm had purchased goods worth 66,000 florins from Danzig citizens.[45] Quirin (Krijn), another member of the Vermeulen family and a successful merchant in the city, financed the printing of a Dutch Bible. He also served as minister and elder in the Danzig Flemish Mennonite congregation, where he worked tirelessly to bring harmony to different groups of Mennonites.[46]

Similarly, the Momber Coffee House in Danzig, owned by a prominent Mennonite family, was so celebrated that poets praised it as "world renowned."[47] Antoni Momber, whose ancestors had fled persecution in the Netherlands, established Danzig's first coffee house in about 1700. The family played a significant role in city business and also in the local Mennonite church. When the city was bombarded by a hostile army in 1732, the Mombers helped to organize care for the needy. The family remained active in Danzig church life until the congregation was dispersed in World War II.[48] In a somewhat similar manner, a distillery in Tiegenhof established a reputation far beyond the delta through its celebrated Machandel, a liqueur reportedly made with elderberries.[49] A number of entrepreneurs were involved in the early development of this firm, but in 1776 the Heinrich Stobbe family gained control and retained it until the end of World War II.[50] Evidently some of the specialty drinks prepared

Bestvater plate (National Museum, Gdańsk; photo by Krystyna Augustniak). The Bestvater family was prominent in the Danzig Mennonite Church and in trade life.

by Mennonites were esteemed enough to be celebrated in song.[51] Thus, despite their relatively small numbers, Mennonites in Danzig carried on an "enormous amount of business" by the middle of the eighteenth century.[52]

In the world of finance, Mennonites also gained a firm footing. Evidently not everyone was pleased to see Mennonites succeed in this arena, however; some of Danzig's inhabitants alleged that Mennonites were profiting from money speculation.[53] Most Mennonites chose to adapt to new conditions in the city; indeed, a number of them had established themselves so firmly in the social and economic structures that they had little difficulty relating to the upper echelons of the governing and trading elite. Thus, it is not surprising that in the latter decades of the century, even after the first partition, Mennonites in Danzig remained strongly supportive of the city's efforts to remain independent.

Former "Zum Lachs," now "Pod Łososiem." Founded in 1598 by the Mennonite leader Ambrosius Vermeulen, this restaurant still sets the standard for Gdańsk cuisine.

Social and Economic Versatility

Not infrequently, economic status and community service provided Mennonites an opportunity to be more fully integrated into society. Adam Wiebe, the Mennonite city engineer, was permitted to build three houses at a Danzig city gate. Moreover, in an unusual gesture of appreciation to Wiebe, the city council granted special trading rights to his son-in-law, Abraham Jantzen.[54]

During the dispute about Mennonites in the weaving industry, some of the members of the Mennonite community found other ways to be more fully integrated into the social fabric. If citizens objected to their acquiring property within the city walls, they used other strategies to achieve the goal of city life. Documents drawn up in the 1740s show that by then numerous Mennonites actually lived in the city. Long-term leases allowed Mennonites of means to become virtually permanent residents of the city.

In some instances, prominent Mennonites did not find it necessary to go through an intermediary, but were openly listed as the owners.[55] The relevant documents indicate that these city dwellers were frequently merchants engaged in the shipping industry; others had distilleries or a business in the city.[56] Despite the success in gaining residence within the city, the privilege of citizenship was still elusive. City records rather laconically note that a Mennonite had gained residency in the city and then, in an apparent effort to gain citizenship, had joined the Reformed Church. City authorities were not impressed and, at least for the immediate future, did not admit him to citizenship.[57]

Both city and farm life must have had its attractions, for records show that some Mennonites with shops and businesses in the city chose to live in farming villages. Some historians have suggested they wanted to escape dangers of war when the city was besieged or perhaps to avoid the recurring disputes with the guilds. At other times, Mennonites moved to the country when the city imposed special financial obligations, ostensibly because they were non-citizens. For example, when some Mennonite merchants gained a dominant position in importing and selling honey and spices, increased city taxes quickly brought protests from the merchants. The guilds, as they often had done, opposed the Mennonite request to have taxes lowered. In any event, a number of city dwellers moved to villages in the lowlands. At the same time, movement from the land to the city was also common. The opportunities in education and business were more promising there. City and church records list numerous persons who left the Werder and found new homes in the Danzig suburbs.[58]

Mennonites in Elbing

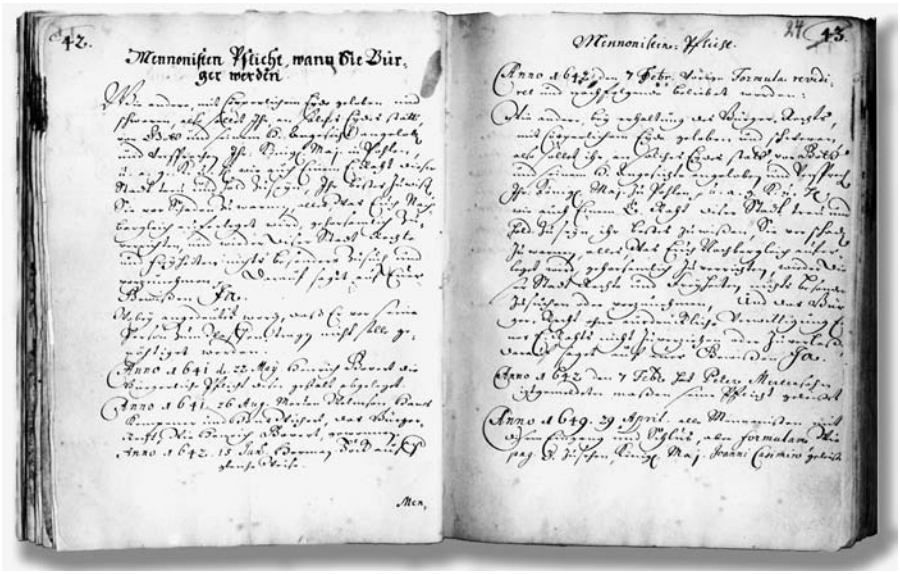
Persons living in urban centers in early modern times usually viewed citizenship as a privilege conferred on inhabitants by virtue of their social standing, economic stature, military or business accomplishments, or special contributions to the life of the city. Consequently, immigrants to the city did not automatically become citizens.[59] The process involved a number of steps in which city authorities evaluated an applicant for this honor. In addition to meeting financial and social criteria, applicants were also expected to agree to defend the city, should the need arise. For Mennonites, achieving citizenship was especially problematic. They were not ad-

herents of any of the officially recognized confessions, nor would they take an oath of allegiance or promise to bear arms to defend the city. In Danzig, the city's rigid adherence to traditional requirements usually barred Mennonites from acquiring citizenship and made it difficult for them to live in the city.

In Elbing, however, the situation was considerably more relaxed. By the latter part of the sixteenth century, some Mennonites were allowed to live in the city.[60] Perhaps the city was reflecting its new cosmopolitan self-image; in the 1580s it concluded a trade treaty that designated Elbing as the port where English goods would be unloaded for shipment to the interior of Poland.[61] Some Mennonites even acquired citizenship, although city leaders repeatedly raised questions about the wisdom of such a policy. In 1637, some members of the city council objected to the practice of allowing "Wiederteuffern" (meaning Mennonites) to acquire citizenship, for they might at some point create problems for the city.[62] In the same year, however, the council allowed a Mennonite to acquire some land just west of the city. This parcel, situated in the marshy "Ellerwald," had been largely unproductive; the prospect of economic gain was viewed as weightier than the danger of having another Mennonite in the community.[63] Other Mennonites soon followed. At the same time, the city was determined to safeguard the economic well-being of its citizens. Sometimes efforts were made to ensure that Mennonites would buy their wares only from citizens and not establish independent commercial operations dealing directly with foreign traders.[64] In other business pursuits, Mennonites were compelled to pay higher duties or taxes than citizens living in the city.

Economic policies of the city government were not uniform, however. They varied from profession to profession, from business to business, from craft to craft. In 1699, a Lutheran and a Mennonite shared the leadership of the important guild of weavers. In some ways, this is not surprising: Mennonites had, after all, introduced lace and braid weaving into Elbing, just as they had in Danzig. Elbing, however, proved much more receptive to Mennonite initiative.[65]

Elbing also opened its social organizations, such as the Brotherhood of St. George and several others, to Mennonite members. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, records list a number of Mennonites as fully accepted members of such social organizations.[66] Even if Mennonites often



City ordinance allowing Mennonites to become citizens (State Archives, Gdańsk). The city of Elbing sometimes made exceptions and permitted Mennonites to become citizens with a simple affirmation instead of an oath.

did not have full equality, they enjoyed far more rights than was customary in many other parts of Europe.

At the same time, Elbing found itself in an uncertain diplomatic and political situation. During the Swedish wars of the 1620s, the Swedes occupied the city. As the only major city in Royal Prussia to suffer this fate, it lost stature diplomatically. Then, in a subsequent Swedish invasion of the delta, Swedes again occupied the city in 1655. As a further humiliation, in the ensuing Peace of Wehlau between Frederick William, elector of Brandenburg, and King John Casimir, Elbing was given as a pawn to the elector to compensate him for expenses incurred in the war with Sweden.[67] The city, however, resolutely pursued and achieved its traditional independence and stature.

Elbing's ambivalent attitude toward Mennonites is not surprising. The city prided itself on its important role as a major center in Royal Prussia. Foreign powers sought its favor. Nonetheless, citizens of such a distinguished city were expected to participate fully in matters such as defense of the city, and this created a problem for Mennonites. When they

declined to bear arms or swear oaths, authorities were reluctant to grant them full rights of citizenship. For the Mennonites, the issue was one of faith, not of loyalty to the state or the city, so Elbing lived with the tension of having industrious and valued inhabitants who were tolerated but who declined to fully accept the obligations of citizens.

Sometimes, as in 1684, Elbing reversed an earlier practice and adopted policies that prohibited the granting of citizenship to Mennonites.[68] Records suggest that such action arose partly because some Mennonite businesspersons had become very successful. Their competitors complained that Mennonite merchants, such as Zacharias Jantzen, were becoming too prominent, and were threatening the livelihood of citizens who faithfully accepted all the duties expected by city and king.[69] Elbing's council demonstrated its ambivalence in this matter when, just three years later, in 1687, it declared that citizenship should be open to Mennonites, recognizing the economic role Mennonites played. In actual practice, however, opponents of such a policy prevailed. Citizenship remained a contentious issue throughout the remainder of Polish rule in Elbing. At the same time, Mennonites continued to participate in a wide variety of trades and remained active as merchants and craftsmen.

In times of war, Mennonites were required to provide extra financial support for the city. This was the case during the Great Northern War (1700–1721), when Elbing was occupied, first by Swedish, then by Russian troops. Sometimes, at the request of Mennonite leaders, administrative officials intervened and convinced the council that new financial demands were excessive.[70] Elsewhere, as in the vicinity of Thorn, Mennonites were required to provide foodstuffs for an invading army.[71] The uncertainties of the protracted war, compounded by Brandenburg-Prussia's occupation of Elbing territory when the king of Poland failed to repay a loan, created a situation in which the city authorities tried to find new sources of revenue. Added financial pressure on Mennonites was coupled with more religious restrictions. Thus, in 1707 the council would not permit Mennonites to reprint a catechism they had first issued in 1660.[72] On the other hand, sometimes when the council imposed further restrictions on Mennonite church services, it was the local Catholic bishop who came to their support.[73] Other similar instances suggest that bishop and council sometimes took opposing positions because of rivalry in a power struggle and defended Mennonites in order to enhance church or state influence.

The usual tension between church and state, or between Lutheran and Catholic members of the hierarchy, did not always protect Mennonites in Elbing. Sometimes both Catholic and Lutheran clergy attempted to regulate Mennonite church practices and obligations. In the mid-eighteenth century, Catholic officials in the St. Nicholas Church demanded that Mennonite ministers pay dues in the local Catholic parish whenever Mennonites conducted services such as burials and marriages. In 1746 the Catholic "Probst" refused to permit the burial of Elder Hermann Jantzen until the usual fees had been paid, and the Mennonite church leaders refused to do so. The stalemate concluded only when the council intervened to support the Mennonite position.[74] Repeatedly, Mennonites found themselves used as pawns as Catholic Church officials and city council members engaged in power struggles.

Similarly, on rural Elbing territory, where Mennonites established flourishing farms in the former marshlands, a related conflict arose as Mennonites expanded their holdings into Lutheran villages. Now Lutheran church officials raised objections, since they were losing income from former Lutheran households and lands. In this instance, the city council came to the support of the Lutheran churches and imposed heavier dues on Mennonites so that Lutheran parishes would not suffer loss of income. The council's position led to a long dispute with Mennonite leaders, and for decades the issue remained a point of tension. The council used various forms of pressure, such as forbidding Mennonites to conduct baptisms or to celebrate communion in city lands, but did allow worship services to take place.[75] The dispute continued for decades, but Mennonites were not expelled from the city or its lands. However, Lutheran pastors who lost parishioners when Mennonites acquired a farm from a Lutheran wanted the newly arrived Mennonite to continue to pay the assessments previously paid to the church.

The council also tried to prevent Lutherans from joining Mennonite congregations. When this did occur, the council seemed uncertain as to how to proceed. Sometimes it virtually ignored such an event or stated that it had no jurisdiction in such matters since Mennonites were officially tolerated.[76] In other instances, the council tried to come to the support of the Lutheran Church. In 1730, the council decided to conduct an investigation of reports that Mennonites were gaining converts from Lutherans churches. The resulting report noted that Lutheran churches were

in difficult straits because they were indeed losing members to Mennonite churches. The problem was illustrated by the case of three Lutheran men who had married Mennonite women and then had joined the Mennonite church. The council responded to this situation by urging, but not requiring, the converts to leave Elbing territory.[77]

Repeatedly, the city council tried to protect the economic interests of the Lutheran Church, but policies were not uniform, nor were they very successful. Among the measures adopted to preserve Lutheran parish income were efforts to discourage sale of Lutheran farms to Mennonites. Sometimes this took the form of added financial dues placed on such Mennonites; in other instances, sellers were required to get special permission to sell to a Mennonite. The seller might be required to show that only a Mennonite had shown interest in buying the land or that only such a person had the necessary means.[78]

By the middle of the eighteenth century, there was fear that the Mennonite expansion would lead to the collapse of some Lutheran congregations. The Elbing council shared these views. When Mennonites applied for permission to build a church in Rosenort in 1753, opposition from the Lutheran Church as well as the expected opposition by the Catholic hierarchy persuaded the council to reject the request. Undeterred, Mennonite leaders appealed to the king and obtained the desired permission.[79] Evidently, Mennonites had also learned how to take advantage of divided authority, whether that of the state or of the several confessions in the region. There was no separation of state and church; rather, religious, political, economic, and social factors were all part of the warp and woof of the complex societal structures of the time. Mennonites were fortunate in that they regularly found support in at least one of the strongholds of power and were by no means averse to policies that tried to balance one center of decision making against another one. They had learned to live peacefully and successfully in a world where they might not be part of the power structure but knew how to relate to those who were.

Uncertainty in Königsberg and Beyond

Another area developed somewhat differently from those farther west. Just east of the Vistula Delta beyond Elbing lay the duchy of Prussia with its capital, Königsberg. In 1525 Duke Albert declared his state Lutheran,

and gradually a number of dissenters from the Netherlands and elsewhere came to this, the first officially Protestant state and established new homes. Mennonites also came, but they soon were denounced by the local Lutheran leader, Bishop Speratus, Duke Albert's trusted advisor. Ordered to leave, they now found new homes in the Vistula Delta and further upstream. Ducal Prussia remained largely closed to Mennonites until the early eighteenth century, when a virulent epidemic depopulated much of the country. In response to this widespread disease and death, King Frederick I issued a call for new settlers. A number of Mennonites from Royal Prussia now decided to seek a better livelihood in Prussia, and a number of fellow believers from Switzerland, where persecution of Anabaptists continued, joined them.[80] Königsberg, the capital city, with its business and manufacturing possibilities, attracted numerous Mennonite families. Others moved to smaller towns and depopulated villages.

Gradually, Mennonite congregations arose in several places in the kingdom of Prussia (in 1701 the duchy had become the kingdom of Prussia, soon to be united with Brandenburg). In 1713, 42 families settled near the mouth of the Memel River; other families followed. Liberties granted to Mennonites here included freedom to choose their own local administrators and to practice their religion. In addition, they were recognized as free settlers, not bound by demands of serfdom.[81] For a time they gained strong support from the authorities, who believed that the coming of more Mennonites would bring real improvement in economic productivity.[82] Evidently, early reports must have been positive, for very soon another 18 families from the Vistula lowlands joined the group.[83] Others followed, so that by 1723, 105 Mennonite families had settled in the Tilsit area.

At the same time, the business and manufacturing possibilities in the capital city attracted a number of these settlers. Here they were permitted to establish businesses but were forbidden to spread Mennonite "errors." One of the Mennonite leaders, Johann Peter Sprunck, sent a confession of faith to the royal court, and evidently this was found acceptable, for the court now issued permission for Mennonites to live anywhere in the city and conduct their services. At the same time, they were expected to make a contribution to the royal treasury.[84]

Problems with other confessions created some difficulties for the Mennonites, however. Some Lutheran leaders were unhappy to see a number of their church members join the Mennonites. When asked why they

had left the state church, they responded, "Because the Mennonites live a quiet, pious life, and they take care of the sick and others who need help."[85] A combination of displeased Lutheran leaders and a king who was angered that Mennonites would not join his armies created a difficult situation.[86] Some of the young men were forcibly impressed into the army; only after Mennonite leaders vigorously protested this action were the men released. In the process, some Mennonite farmers contended that the incident was a violation of promises made earlier by the royal court.[87] The king's response was to notify these farmers that they were no longer welcome in his realm. As a result, in 1724, Mennonites who had scarcely had time to get settled were expelled from the Tilsit and the nearby Kukerneese lowlands. Government records indicate that at least 105 families, perhaps totaling about 600 persons, left the region and moved into Royal Prussia. Here they found new homes in the Vistula Delta, especially in Thiensdorf [88] as well as up the river in places such as Tragheimerweide.[89] Mennonites in the delta, as well as in the Netherlands and Hamburg sent substantial assistance to the new refugees, sometimes as a gift, at other times as an interest-free loan.

The eviction mentioned above did not include Mennonites in or near Königsberg, who were too involved in the economic life of the city and were recognized as important contributors to the royal treasury. A number of them were permitted to weave, to make cloth, and to establish distilleries. They were especially involved in the production of fine lace and braid. In 1730, after they had repeatedly attempted to secure citizenship but had been excluded because they would not take an oath or bear arms, they were given royal permission to sell their wares in the city and beyond.[90] Some prominent Mennonites, such as Bernd Claassen van Dyck, a prosperous merchant, repeatedly attempted to gain full citizenship, but opposition from the guilds prevented this.

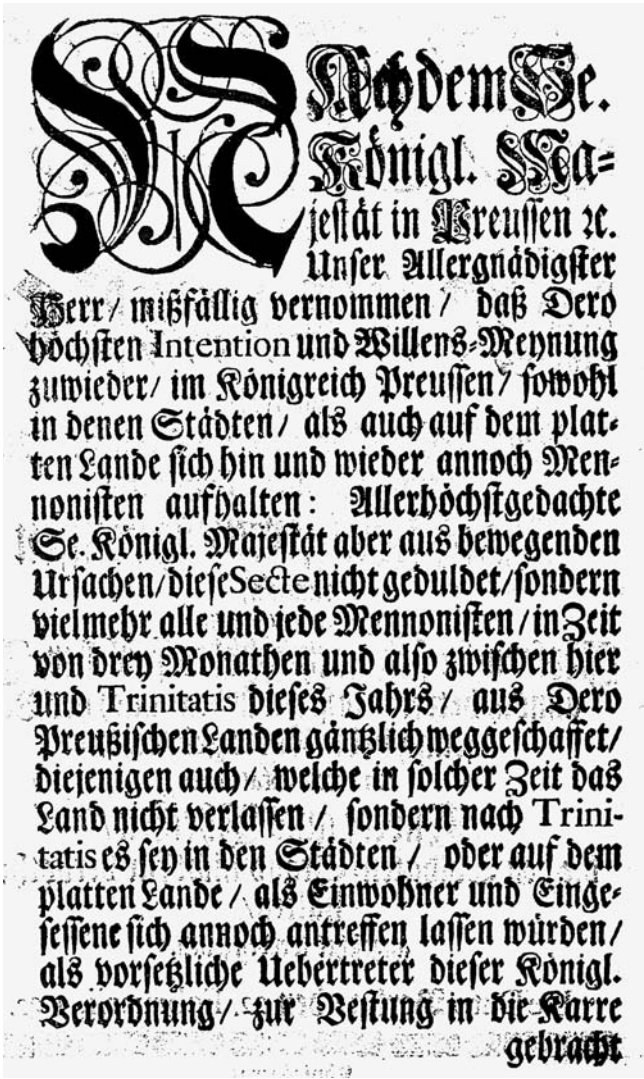
For a king who was determined to build a strong army, the Mennonite refusal to bear arms remained an irritant. The decree ordering Mennonites in certain areas to leave the kingdom was not the last instance of royal ambition and Mennonite belief coming into conflict. An unusual opportunity presented itself when Calvinists in a Catholic country faced the same kind of situation that the Tilsit Mennonites had encountered. In Austria, Salzburg adherents of the Reformed faith were ordered to leave the country. For Prussia's King Frederick William, himself a Calvinist, this pro-

vided an opportunity to acquire settlers who would be more supportive of his military ambitions. He invited them to settle on land from which he would expel Mennonites. A royal decree, dated 22 February 1732, with the expressed purpose of "getting rid of" (*wegzuschaffen*) Mennonites, declared that "within three months," they were to leave the kingdom. Their lands were to be made available to settlers who "do not regard military service as prohibited."[91]

Landlords such as Count von Truchsess zu Waldburg immediately expressed concerns. The count stated that the Mennonites were outstanding farmers and had, at their own expense, "dug canals and drainage ditches, as well as built windmills and thereby secured the region against yearly floods. Marshes and bush lands had become productive lands and meadows."[92] It would be impossible, the count continued, for him to find equally skilled water engineers. Other supporters of Mennonites insisted that to drive them out of Königsberg would deprive the city of its most skilled weavers, tapestry makers, and wool spinners. Cornelius Claassen was described as "without equal" in making thread "according to the English style" and employed more than forty craftsmen. Hendrik van Duhren, also from the city, had a cloth-making factory that employed more than eighty skilled craftsmen. Berndt Claassen van Dyck conducted a substantial fine cloth trade with Danzig, while Dirk Conwent had a leather factory. Others operated a financial exchange office, operated grain mills, or held various other productive positions.

Because some members of the royal administration made presentations like these to King Frederick William, Mennonites conducting trade and manufacturing in the city were allowed to stay. Those living on farms, however, were ordered to leave. The king announced that new settlers coming from Salzburg were to take their places. Ironically, as these Salzburgers came down the Vistula, they lodged temporarily in Danzig, where the city gathered funds to assist them. The two Danzig Mennonite churches also provided 1,415 florins to help the refugees.[93] The fact that they would displace Mennonites in the kingdom of Prussia did not stop Danzig Mennonites from assisting the needy. The victims of intolerance elsewhere could not be blamed for the expulsion of these Mennonite farmers.

Upon reconsideration, the king felt the commercial contributions of Mennonites in the capital would be more difficult to replace than those brought by skilled farmers, so the Mennonite farmers left and business-



Nachdem Se. Königl. Majestät in Preussen ꝛc. Unser Allergnädigster Herr / mißfällig vernommen / daß Dero höchsten Intention und Willens-Meynung zuwieder / im Königreich Preussen / sowohl in denen Städten / als auch auf dem platten Lande sich hin und wieder annoch Mennonisten aufhalten: Allerhöchstgedachte Se. Königl. Majestät aber aus bewegenden Ursachen / diese Secte nicht geduldet / sondern vielmehr alle und jede Mennonisten / in Zeit von drey Monathen und also zwischen hier und Trinitatis dieses Jahrs / aus Dero Preußischen Landen gäntzlich weggeschaffet / diejenigen auch / welche in solcher Zeit das Land nicht verlassen / sondern nach Trinitatis es sey in den Städten / oder auf dem platten Lande / als Einwohner und Eingesessene sich annoch antreffen lassen würden / als vorsetzliche Uebertreter dieser Königl. Verordnung / zur Vestung in die Karre gebracht

Decree expelling Mennonites from the Kingdom of Prussia. (State Archives, Gdańsk).

persons stayed. Not all officials agreed with the king, but he remained adamant.[94] Once again, expelled Mennonites found a welcome among their fellow-Mennonites in the Vistula Delta or farther up the river, where the bishop of Kulm made land available to them. Aid also came from churches in the Netherlands.

But the last chapter in this saga had not yet been written. With the accession of Frederick II, Mennonites were again invited to return. In 1740 he announced that "persuasive reasons" had convinced him to annul the expulsion decree of 1732: "All Mennonites who wish to settle in our kingdom of Prussia are welcome to establish themselves in our cities or on the land."[95] Almost immediately, a number of Mennonites, mostly from the Vistula Delta, decided to move.[96] A good number of them settled near Labiau and later also in Gumbinnen and Tilsit. In 1767 they built a church in the town of Plauschwarren, near Tilsit, where for many years they had a membership of about 250, composed primarily of farmers in the area.

Others came to Königsberg and joined the congregation that already existed there. In 1769 a church was built in the capital city, and as usual, a hospice was constructed to accommodate the needy. The members continued to be engaged in a variety of trades and businesses and established themselves as recognized craftsmen, merchants, bankers, and factory owners. They now began to request the right to be members of guilds and also gain citizenship. Once again objections arose from guilds and the city council; however, the king sent explicit instructions to allow Mennonites the same rights as those held by other members of society. As a result, Mennonites could now join guilds and also become citizens. Instead of giving the customary oath, Mennonites were permitted to affirm their loyalty with a simple handshake.

By the time of the first partition of Poland in 1772, when Frederick II seized the Vistula Delta (except Danzig) and most of the rest of Royal Prussia, Mennonites in the kingdom of Prussia numbered about 570. Some two-thirds engaged in farming; the other third lived in the cities, conducting a variety of businesses and practicing various trades and professions. Ironically, their political rights, such as the opportunity to gain citizenship in the cities and to practice any profession, had now surpassed the rights available in most of Royal Prussia. Indeed, one historian described them as a privileged group, since they did not need to serve in the military or pay special fees for such an exemption.[97]

DECLARATION
Des
PATENTS
vom 22ten Februarii 1732,
Daß diejenige
Mennoniſten,
Welche ſich
zu Königsberg
und
an andern Orten
des
Königreichs Preuſſen
häußlich niederlaſſen und ehrlich ernähren
wollen,
aufgenommen werden ſollen.
De Dato Berlin, den 14ten Auguſti 1740.
Königsberg,
Gedruckt in der Königl. Preußiſchen Hof-Buchdruckerey.

Frederick II rescinds decree of 1732, inviting Mennonites to return to his kingdom.

After Frederick William III took Danzig in 1793, some Danzig Mennonites, led by Elder Jacob de Veer, Berend Momber, and others, asked the king to extend to them the same rights and privileges enjoyed by citizens of Königsberg. This included a request for citizenship and full participation in guilds. The reply was forthright: Mennonites were to have the same rights as other citizens (*gleich den übrigen dortigen Bürgern*).[98] On the other hand, since Mennonites were not members of a state church, they were required to register births, marriages, and deaths with the Lu-

theran or Reformed pastor of the parish in which they lived. They were also required to pay regular church dues to parish churches.

The Mennonite community in East Prussia had two congregations, one in the capital city, the other in the region around Tilsit. Each had its own church building. One church, in the city of Königsberg, joined with the city church in Elbing to hire a pastor in the first half of the nineteenth century. The Mennonites living in the rural areas, such as the Tilsit region, followed the tradition of having a lay ministry. Both churches continued to function until the end of World War II. The latter months of the war brought extensive flight from East Prussia, and Mennonites joined that exodus. Others perished when the capital was largely destroyed by bombing in September 1944. Mennonite church life in this region came to an end in the last stages and aftermath of the war.[99]

CHAPTER 4

Along the Banks of Poland's Mighty River

From the sixteenth until the eighteenth century, the promise of religious toleration and economic opportunity up the Vistula beckoned settlers to move farther inland. Not all regional authorities were equally elastic in their religious policies, so Mennonite settlement in these areas was not uniform. However, the welcoming attitudes of a number of landowners, government officials, and accommodating members of the Catholic hierarchy helped to bring a significant flow of colonists all the way from the delta to Warsaw and beyond. Most of the resulting communities were small, and the movement of these persons remained rather fluid as new opportunities invited settlement in other regions.

The strong religious commitment of these Mennonites meant that a number of new congregations arose, although they were sometimes very small and short-lived. These communities tended to have relatively more ethnically diverse settlers than was common in the Werder, since members came from a wide range of geographical locations, including Moravia, Austria, and other parts of Germany, as well as from Mennonite settlements that already existed in the delta and elsewhere.[1]

Mennonites Come to the Montau Area

Although the Vistula Delta had absorbed the majority of Mennonite settlers, flood plains and other low-lying regions up the river also offered

strong opportunities. One of the larger communities arose in Montau and its vicinity, where the royal officials and members of the nobility proved especially receptive to Mennonites looking for a place to settle. Many who established new villages here came from the Vistula Delta and the duchy (later kingdom) of Prussia. Others came from parts of the Austrian empire such as Moravia, where Anabaptists lived under rulers who were often intolerant of dissident religious views.

As in many other areas of Royal Prussia, the royal administrator (*starosta*) often changed. During much of the latter part of the sixteenth century, John Dulski, a member of the Polish nobility, served as administrator of these crown lands. Upon his death, King Stefan Bathory bestowed these territories on the royal secretary, Reinhold Heidenstein. When he died in 1620, his widow, Theresa, a member of the aristocratic family Konarski, retained possession of the lands until her son, John Heidenstein, with his wife, Katherine Witowski, assumed control of the lands. With the death of John Heidenstein, the crown lands passed to the powerful Potocki family. They retained this position until the seizure of the territory by Frederick II in 1772.

Archival records indicate that royal administrators often took the initiative in bringing settlers to this area. Noticing that Mennonite settlers had established productive farms in the delta, they invited Mennonites to come to the region around Montau in order to convert the largely uninhabited pastureland along the river into productive farms. Thus, a number of Mennonite settlers from the Vistula Delta established farms in this region in the 1560s.

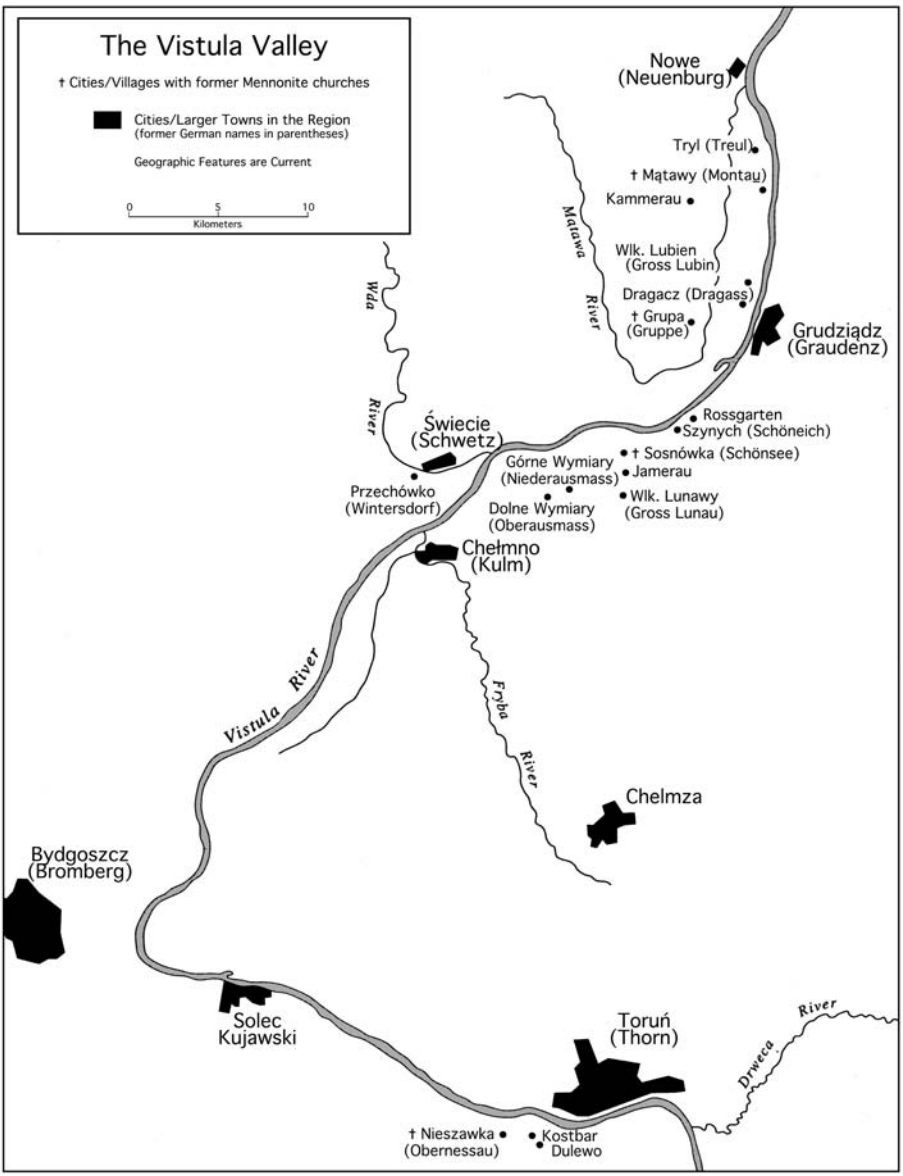
In 1568 John Dulski, as royal administrator in the region, signed a twelve-year lease agreement with eighteen Dutch Mennonites from the delta.[2] The Mennonites acquired fifty desolate and uninhabited farmsteads. These new settlers were exempted from responsibilities at court and were not required to perform labor for the local lord. They were, as was customary, required to pay a specified amount to Dulski and also to the local priest. In 1569 King Sigismund II Augustus confirmed this contract.[3] When this lease expired in 1580, the new one raised fees to 1,500 marks. It was renewed for eighteen years, with Julius Frantsen, Jakob Schmidt, and Dietrich Witken signing on behalf of the settlers. Evidently the royal administrator was pleased with the results of the first lease, for he wrote that "the land and village of Montau, which earlier were desolate, and

which produced almost no income . . . through care and hard work have become productive and arable."[4] In 1586, in one of the first of such permissions, the settlers were also allowed to build a church[5]—an example of the often-benign attitude expressed by local ecclesiastical authorities. The same year, in negotiations illustrating the positive relations Mennonites were maintaining with the royal administrator and ecclesiastical authorities, they were also given permission to have their own school.[6]

The settlement prospered. Not surprisingly, when the lease was renewed, the assessment was increased.[7] The arrangement also provided for a measure of security and stability, for the land was held in emphyteutic tenure, which had many similarities to actual ownership of the land.[8] Also, if the owner planned to take back his land at the expiration of a lease, he had to reimburse the lessee for improvements made. At the same time, restrictions typical of the time were usually imposed. Thus, grain usually had to be milled in the landlord's mill, farm products had to be sold in specified venues, and trade practices were carefully regulated. The system seemed to be satisfactory to all sides, for records show that many families kept their land for centuries.

Montau provided a center for the founding of new settlements, for much of the surrounding region had been flooded and had fallen into disuse so that the landlord received no income from the property. The administrator, Jan Dulski, leased additional land to Mennonites in nearby Sanskau, so that another settlement, Little Sanskau, was founded nearby. Over the following decades, the new communities regularly renewed their leases with successive administrators. Within a few years, Mennonite settlement expanded to include part of the larger, older Great Sanskau. Similarly, Mennonite settlers moved onto crown land near Neuenburg (Nowe). Here they lived together with their Lutheran neighbors on land that was leased from a member of the nobility.

Evidently, the settlement continued to prosper and enjoy royal favor. In 1627, at the request of the *starosta*, Theresa Heidenstein, King Władysław IV relaxed some restrictions and granted the villagers of Montau permission to sell their goods along the Vistula River.[9] It was not the last time the king would express his support of Mennonite settlers. Thus, a lease agreement signed in 1636 reflected this growing confidence in the future promise of Montau and its surroundings. This time it was for fifty years, with the rent set at 1,600 gulden and a requirement to provide ten hams



Map of the Vistula Valley in the Kulm vicinity (drawn by Gail Enns). Here cities and numerous villages became homes for Mennonites.

annually to the *starosta*.[10] As in many other places, these settlers suffered great deprivation during the Thirty Years War as Swedish armies traversed this area, so that payments to the landlord were reduced to about 20 percent of normal amounts.[11]

Expansion of Settlements

Although the productive soil and skilled agricultural practices of the settlers created a flourishing community, hardship and devastation came to the region when floods inundated the area or roving armies pillaged the villages. During much of the seventeenth century, Poland-Lithuania was a battlefield. Soon after the ravages of the Thirty Years War, Poland was subjected to the First Northern War (1655–60), as noted earlier. Swedish armies invaded Poland and for a time occupied most of Royal Prussia. Much of the delta was devastated, and as Swedish troops moved along the Vistula River, they brought devastation to villages such as Montau as well as Great and Little Sanskau. When these villages could not meet their payments, King John Casimir appointed a commission to examine the situation. The Peace of Oliva brought an end to war in the region in 1660, and a relieved populace began the difficult task of recovery.

In 1671 the royal commission, presided over by Peter Tucholka, a deputy administrator in Marienburg, met in Sanskau. By then the villagers had paid 1,800 gulden, so the matter was quickly resolved. However, the process clearly demonstrated that Mennonites could have recourse to legal appeals.[12] This was all the more remarkable since serfdom was still widespread in many parts of central and eastern Europe.

On other occasions, flooding devastated villages. Although dikes had been built along the Vistula as well as along smaller streams, unusually high water sometimes broke the dikes and flooded homes and land. This occurred in both 1674 and 1675.[13] In 1677 the *sejmik* of Royal Prussia considered the situation serious enough to warrant sending an inspector to assess the damage. The resulting report confirmed extensive flooding losses and recommended reduction of dues.[14] In addition, King John Sobieski issued a letter of protection, forbidding passing troops to take up quarters in the affected villages or to put any demands on the villagers.[15] However, this provided little protection as Swedish, Saxon, Polish, and Russian troops passed through the region and, as was customary in previ-

ous wars, again lived off the land during the Great Northern War (1700–1721).[16]

Sometimes, it was the *starosta* who took special steps to ease the plight of the villagers, remitting some regular payments or adding privileges. In 1686, as a result of earlier devastation by floods, Count Casimir Potocki granted Montau Mennonites the right to freely sell their products such as cloth, fish, herring, wine, and beer. During the Great Northern War and its aftermath, especially difficult times came to the region as troops set up quarters there. The situation became so serious that in 1727 Count Potocki simply waived dues not paid during the earlier time of war.[17] In 1732 the Montau villagers concluded their last lease agreement with the count. It was scheduled to expire in 1786, but by then the region had fallen under Prussian rule.

Lease agreements between Mennonites and various administrators usually reflect positive relationships between the two groups. Sometimes, however, difficulties arose for reasons not evident in the relevant documents. A rather unusual situation developed in the village of Kommorsk, just a few miles west of Montau. Here, in 1637, Bishop Lubieński granted a thirty-year lease to "industrious Hollanders" (probably Mennonites). Records are incomplete, but in 1688 the lease was renewed for another thirty years.[18] Then, in 1709, the lease was extended for another forty years. Well before the lease expired, however, the local bishop, now Christof Szembek, confronted a perplexing situation.

The village of Kommorsk had both Polish and Mennonite settlers, and for reasons not fully explained, the Poles lodged a complaint against the Mennonites. The complaint alleged that "heretics" had deprived faithful Catholics of their rightful livelihood and had acquired land that should be held by Catholics. The Mennonites requested that a commission be appointed to look into the matter, and the bishop agreed. The report issued by the commission recommended that the Mennonites be reimbursed for investments they had made but that the land be given to the Poles. The Mennonites replied that the level of recommended reimbursement was far below actual value and requested that a second commission be appointed. The bishop agreed, and this time both sides appointed evaluators, so that arbitration, rather than decree of *starosta* or king, was selected to resolve the issue. Both the Mennonites and Polish farmers accepted the resulting report. The bishop approved the recommendations, and the dispute

was settled. The Mennonites, however, had to find new homes. Kommorsk thus provides an unusual example of how a lease agreement, made for forty years and signed in 1709, was terminated in 1722 with the declared agreement of the various parties concerned.[19] Apparently, the issue involved positions of leadership in the village, for the bishop, in a report dated 20 August 1728, stated that he had acted in a similar way in Schottland, where he had removed Mennonites from positions of local public office and appointed Catholics in their place.[20]

Throughout the two centuries of Polish rule over Mennonites in the Montau area, the settlement retained its strongly Mennonite character. In numerous villages, both in the delta and in the long valleys along the river, Mennonites often lived side by side with Lutherans and Catholics. In Montau, however, Mennonites were virtually the only religious group of the community and remained the dominant element until the end of the Mennonite presence in the aftermath of World War II.

Settlements up the Vistula

Farther upstream but in the same valley, other villages became the center of Mennonite settlements. Villages such as Gross Lubin (Wielkie Libień), Dragass (Dragacz), Kommerau (Osiek), and Sibsau became noted for their cattle, hogs, and sheep. A surviving document, issued by *starosta* Jan Zborowski of Graudenz in 1591, states that he leased these "territories devastated by flooding and war" to "Hollanders" for fifty years and for an annual fee of 1,087 guilders.[21] In 1623 villages in this area received an additional concession when the king expressly exempted them from military responsibilities and quartering of troops.[22] The agreement was renewed in 1640, and then again in 1687. This arrangement continued until the first partition of Poland, when Prussia took over this region. The last lease, dated 7 November 1740, was arranged by the royal administrator and confirmed by the king.[23] By that time, however, the relatively large number of Mennonites living there had decreased; apparently the sandy soil made it difficult to grow good crops. Some settlers moved further upstream.

Similar arrangements led to the founding of the village of Klein Lubin (Mały Lubien). The royal administrator, Jan Zborowski, leased the land to Mennonites in 1593. Assessments amounted to 250 guilders per an-

num. A renewal of the lease in 1632 was for forty years and mentioned the "honorable men Christoff Schultz, Casper Janzon, Abraham Meinerth, Peter Hapner, Heinrich Conradts and David Lorentz."[24] The last lease agreement for Klein Lubin covered the years 1720–70 and was signed by Dirck Görtz and David Vogt.

In 1593, a local administrator allowed a village to be established on nearby pastureland that earlier settlers in Gross and Klein Lubin used for grazing. He leased the land to Mennonites, and thus the village of Dragass arose. An inclusive document issued by King Sigismund III in 1595 allowed the settlers in Dragass, Gross Lubin and Klein Lubin, and Klein Wolz to sell their goods along the Vistula River and thus augment their income. Such concessions proved especially important in times of high water and flooding such as occurred in 1651. Losses proved so extensive that the king exempted some of the villages from all financial obligations to the crown for four years.[25] A remarkable exemption granted by King John III in 1689 stipulated that the "dissidents" living in Gross and Klein Lubin as well as in Dragass were exempted from paying regular dues to the Catholic Church "because they do not belong to the Roman Church."[26]

Other Mennonite or partially Mennonite villages arose when the *starosta* of Schwetz (Świecie), Sophie Herbert von Fulstein, leased land in Deutsch Westfalen (Niemiecki Stwolno) to people from the Netherlands in 1593, and soon expanded this to include other nearby villages. Brattwin, Great Westfalen, and Neunhuben (Dziewięć Włók) became other communities with significant Mennonite populations. An unusual land acquisition occurred in 1745 when the owner of Neunhuben approached Franz Kopper, living in Brattwin, and asked if he had any interest in acquiring ownership. Kopper then approached six others, and together they bought Neunhuben. Since this was crown land, the local *starosta* had to give approval; a chronicler reported that a number of visits and "good gifts" clinched the deal.[27]

Another Mennonite community arose in Gruppe (Grupa) when Felix Konarski, a member of the nobility, leased village land to Abraham Franns, Lahwe Ekert, and Hans Krieker in 1604. Other parcels of land were leased to Mennonites, and gradually two villages, Upper and Lower Gruppe, developed. Leases were still in effect when Prussia took this region. For the settlers, the effect of this change was immediate—their rent was almost tripled.[28]

The Mennonites living in Gruppe and the nearby villages decided to build their own house of worship, an affiliate of Montau. They did so in about 1776, creating the Montau-Gruppe Mennonite Church. Apparently the church building was not adequately sheltered from flooding, however, and repeated damage to the structure led the congregation to construct a new brick building, which was dedicated in 1866. Just a few years later, the congregation separated from its parent church in Montau because of differences about service in the military. Elder Peter Bartel in the Gruppe congregation insisted that members should not bear arms, although they might serve as medics.[29] The congregation soon changed its position to permit full military service at the discretion of the person involved.

These villages along the Vistula often faced the danger of being flooded, either by the large river or by some of the smaller streams in the area. Settlers soon realized this and formed a dike association to address this problem. An agreement, dated 4 April 1605, stated that representatives of the villages Dragass, Gross and Klein Gruppe, Gross and Klein Lubin, Gross and Klein Sanskau, Kommerau, and Montau met to develop procedures for keeping the Montau stream clean and free of weeds. Costs were to be proportionate to the size of landholdings. Elected officials were assigned the responsibility of dealing with any who were delinquent in payments. This process served as a model elsewhere and remained in force throughout the period of Polish rule.[30]

The Graudenz Area

Across the river and east of the Montau-Gruppe area, a number of Mennonites settled near Graudenz. Evidently Mennonites began coming to Gross and Klein Wolz in this area during the second half of the sixteenth century, for a surviving document from 1579, written by Hans Hansen, originally from the Netherlands but now living in Klein Wolz, outlines what he wants done with his land in the event of his death.[31] On another occasion, an administrator's report in 1604 describes how "39 farmyards in Gross Wolz" have been leased to Dutch settlers "according to Hollander practices."[32] In the second half of the century, however, Gross Wolz and nearby villages came upon very hard times, for the Vistula broke through its dike and flooded the area repeatedly. In addition, the war with Sweden

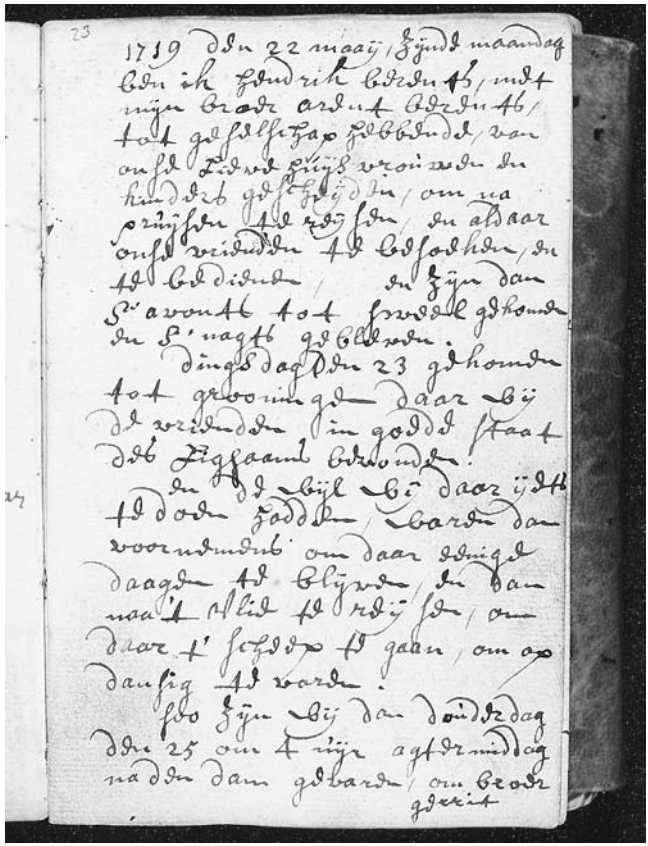
brought armies to the area, and at least one of the farms was burnt. Most Mennonites in these villages decided to look for better prospects.

A similar fate came to the village Tusch, where the administrator, Jan Zborowski, leased land to Mennonites at the end of the sixteenth century. Thomas Heidebreker, Joachim Levin, and several others, in typical Mennonite fashion "gave their true word" (rather than swearing) that they would abide by the agreement.[33] Here too, war and floods led the Mennonites to seek a more accommodating area.

The Schwetz Basin

Przechówka, or Wintersdorf, was one of the important villages that Mennonites established in the Schwetz basin. Reports suggest that some Mennonites arrived here by the 1540s, coming from Groningen.[34] Early records are sketchy, but in 1642, Jan Zawadzki, a royal administrator from Danzig, granted a fifty-year lease to Mennonites in the village. This community maintained close ties with Mennonites in the Netherlands, as several ministerial visits by leaders of churches in Groningen show.[35] The fact that Elder Hendrik Berents Hulshoff, a visiting Mennonite elder from the Netherlands, spent several days with "our friends" in this vicinity suggests that ties between churches here and in the Netherlands were close. Hulshoff described various church events such as baptism, communion, and worship services. He also gave a list of families he visited in various nearby villages, including Przechówka, a village that became virtually deserted in the succeeding decades as its inhabitants looked for more promising areas. The majority of names listed are Dutch, although some of the families apparently had come from Moravia and other areas in the south.

Sometimes unscrupulous royal officials, who tried to extort additional money from them, victimized villages. Not infrequently, Mennonites presented gifts to officials, but when demands seemed excessive, they appealed to higher authorities. In one such instance, a local administrator, Willibald von Haxberg, extorted funds from a number of Mennonite communities.[36] When this was brought to the attention of King John Casimir, he vigorously defended the Mennonites and denounced the offending official. Once again, Mennonites found remarkable reception at the royal court. In addition, local officials, whether under the crown, church, or nobles, usually maintained good relations with Mennonites. Despite occasional un-



Hulshoff journal (Universiteitsbibliotheek, Amsterdam). This excerpt from Elder Hulshoff's journal records how, in May 1719, he and his brother Arent began their journey to "Prussia" to "visit and serve friends."

toward events, settlers at Przechówka prospered in their farming and also developed linen weaving as an important income supplement.[37] So also did neighboring mostly Mennonite villages such as Schönau (Przechowo) and Beckersitz. Mennonites also settled in Deutsch Konopath, close to Przechówka. However, excessively sandy soil hampered agricultural development here, and eventually many Mennonite settlers left.

Other Mennonite settlements nearby included those in Glugowka, Christfelde (Chrystkowo), and Kossowo. Toward the end of the seventeenth century, the villages came to be owned by Count Władysław Dönhoff, who gave the villages their own charter that provided for lo-

cal jurisdiction.[38] This document outlined a number of conditions to be recognized by all concerned. Thus, the village *Schulze* (mayor) could be freely elected, grain could be transported to Danzig and sold there and elsewhere, religious freedom was recognized, and villages were free to appoint schoolteachers. Lease payments were clearly stipulated. For a time the villages prospered, but the second Polish-Swedish war brought many hardships when armies traversed the region in 1658. By the middle of the eighteenth century, almost all Mennonites had left both Kossowo and Christfelde.

Another village, Kleinsee (Jeziorka), arose to the west of the Vistula. In 1727 some Mennonite families settled here and were granted a lease for forty years by the owner, Hedwig von Steffens-Wybczyński.[39] They were promised freedom of religious practices, provided that they continue the parish dues previously granted the Catholic Church. In 1732 religious pressures on Mennonites residing near Kulm led twelve families to join the group in Kleinsee. Further expansion of the community came in the following years. The new settlers were given the usual lease of forty years. In this instance, the lease-holders agreed to a special condition: they would perform two days of work annually for the landowner.[40] A small village, Kempe Ostrowo, later known as Ehrental, was also established on the left bank, with only five Mennonite families. Later, the Vistula changed course, and the village was now on the right bank. Several floods, poor soil quality, and differences with Catholic authorities plagued the settlements in both Kleinsee and Ehrental, and no strong, thriving community ever emerged here.

Tensions also arose with the local landlord, a Polish noble who demanded that Mennonite settlers on his lands perform the same scutage services provided by Polish settlers. For Mennonites, who had come as free persons and not as serfs, this seemed a novel and extraordinary request. A number of them began to look for better opportunities elsewhere.[41] In 1764, delegates from Jeziorka went to Berlin to explore settlement possibilities.[42] Such a move would mean leaving Polish jurisdiction and moving to lands ruled by Frederick II. One of the king's officials, Franz Balthasar Schönberg von Brenkenhoff, was charged with bringing new settlers to the Netze (Noteć) River region, near Driesen in Brandenburg, some 130 miles west of Toruń.[43] When he invited Mennonites to settle there, they accepted. In 1764, twenty-eight Mennonite families received

settlement rights, with specified privileges. They were granted religious freedom, exemption from military service and the swearing of oaths, and each received forty morgen of land. Later they also received permission to establish and maintain their own schools. In the spring of 1765, thirty-five families arrived at their new home; the twenty-eight from Jeziorka had been joined by others from Przechówka and Schönsee.[44] Several treks eventually brought some 166 Mennonites to the area.[45]

The settlers, centered in Brenkenhoffswalde (Błotnica) and Franztal (Gęboczek), at first held church services in homes, but in 1778 they dedicated a newly constructed church building in Brenkenhoffswalde. Nine years later, another church was built in Franztal, with financial help from Holland and Hamburg.[46] The community gained an unexpected leader in 1788 when a local Lutheran teacher, Wilhelm Lange, requested permission from the local authorities to join the Mennonite Church and accept its beliefs. The request was granted, and soon a number of other Lutherans, including the Lenzmann, Klatt, and Johann Lange families, also joined the Mennonites. Wilhelm Lange served the Mennonites not only as teacher but soon also as preacher, as itinerant minister to Mennonite congregations along the Vistula, and eventually as elder. Later, when most of the families decided to emigrate to Russia in 1834, Lange continued as their leader.

King Frederick William III and a communication he issued to the local Mennonite community occasioned the emigration to Russia. Royal policy decreed that the traditional exemption from military service would be abolished. In the message from the court, the king said he would like to help the Mennonites, but he could not exempt them from the obligations borne by other citizens. Almost all members of the Mennonite settlement now decided to emigrate to the Molochna region in New Russia, where they expected to find a government that would permit observance of traditional Mennonite beliefs.

Even before going to Russia, Lange wrote to Mennonite leaders there and expressed his concerns about a style of congregational life that he regarded as too relaxed.[47] He was a strong leader, whose views on church life had a major impact wherever he went. Lange's group founded the Gnadenfeld village and church, which became an influential center of Mennonite life in the Molochna Colony. The Brenkenhoffswalde Mennonite Church, however, ceased to exist.

One of the last Mennonite homes in Przechówka. Once a thriving Mennonite center, Przechówka became a deserted village when most of its inhabitants moved to New Russia (Ukraine) in 1832. This house was still standing in 2002 but is now gone. A desolate cemetery remains nearby.

Settlements near Kulm

In 1505 the king of Poland granted the bishop of Kulm extensive rights to the city and vicinity; at the time, both the king and the city held various parcels of land in and near the city. Thus, when Mennonites began settling in this region, the roles of the bishop, the king's administrators, and the city always had to be considered. Early Mennonite settlement occurred in villages such as Schöneich (Szynych), Gross Lunau, Schönsee (Sosnówka), Jamerau (Brankowka), and Dorposch (Dorposz). Precise dates of earliest settlements are difficult to establish, but in 1553, King Sigismund Augustus granted Mennonites the right to settle in the area. Evidently Schönsee was the first community established.[48] The first lease agreement is apparently lost, but a second one, dated 26 September 1595, was signed by representatives from the city of Kulm and persons from the Netherlands: Joachim Michels, Peter Vogt, Junge Cornels, Alte Cornelius, Arend Jantsche, Baltzer Mathisen, and others. Later records indicate that they were Mennonites, but Hutterites from Moravia apparently also

came here in the middle of the sixteenth century.[49] They too were fleeing persecution in their homeland.

The records show that the settlers came to barren land and were given materials for building homes and barns by the city council. Nevertheless, the council expressly stated that ownership of the land, as well the right of legal jurisdiction, remained with the council. Furthermore, sale of Mennonite products was not to create competition for city dwellers. Certainly, one of the most important aspects of the agreement was the statement that the settlers were free to practice religion in their own way. The bishop of Kulm expressly stated that such "dissidents" were to be granted freedom to observe their religion.

Two Mennonite congregations, one Flemish, the other Frisian, arose here in about 1570. Both built their own churches, and they also established a school with their own teachers.[50] Records suggest that the Frisian church was built in 1618.[51] The Flemish church must have been built at approximately the same time as well, but by the early eighteenth century both congregations were using the same church building. Both churches had their own preachers and maintained close relations with churches in the Netherlands and in the delta, as a number of reports of ministerial visits show.[52] Sometimes persons coming from the delta as well as from Prussia augmented the number of Mennonites here. At almost the same time, a number of them moved to new settlements, such as Brenkenhoffswalde or Deutsch Kazun, and later to Volhynia. In 1849 the two congregations merged. They now remodeled the Frisian church building, which was used until the end of World War II.

Other Mennonite settlements in this vicinity, such as Jamerau, were also established in the sixteenth century. The oldest extant lease agreement here is dated 1626, but it refers to a previous one drawn up thirty years earlier. Mennonite names included in the agreement, such as Fott, Baltzer, Decker, and Zimmerman, are typical of others found in nearby settlements. Since different parcels of land were held under several jurisdictions, specific lease conditions varied. Unlike some other agreements, the thirty-year lease agreement that permitted Mennonites to settle in Gross Lunau in 1604 prohibited the building of a church. Moreover, the lease stipulated that there could be no public anti-Catholic teaching. Bishop Laurentius Gembicki had given permission for the lease only with the stipulation that these conditions would be met.

Chełmno City Hall. Under the Teutonic Knights this city served as a major administrative and juridical center.

Villagers in Gross Lunau were allowed local self-government, and craftsmen were permitted to make and sell various goods, providing they paid regular fees to the city guilds.[53] When the lease was renewed in 1664, Gross Lunau was permitted to build and maintain its own school. In approximately 1725, villages in this vicinity implemented a program of fire insurance. Most of its members in the first few decades were Mennonites, but other settlers soon saw the benefits of such a development and joined

this community endeavor. A similar program had been implemented in the Large Werder a full century earlier.

At the same time, flooding from the Vistula remained a persistent threat, since most of the lands where Mennonites had settled had to be drained by windmills and protected by dikes. Since high water often prevented the growing of grain, farmers turned increasingly to cattle raising and used flood plains for pasture. The skill that enabled Mennonites to make a living in places that had been wasteland impressed local authorities and strengthened their decision to welcome Mennonites.[54] In subsequent years, many of the early settlers moved to the higher elevation of nearby settlements to escape the danger of flooding. In doing so, they might leave a village that was largely Mennonite and often had a Mennonite *Schultze*[55] and become members of Catholic or Lutheran communities.

This occurred when a number of Mennonites moved into the village of Schöneich, just a few kilometers downstream from Schönsee, where Mennonites were already well established. In Schöneich, Mennonites joined Catholics and Lutherans, as they did in several other communities in the vicinity, such as Dorposch, Gross and Klein Lunau, Niederausmass (Dolne Wymiary), and Venedia. In such instances, Mennonites might settle on land belonging to the city, to the bishop of Kulm, or held by nobles. Sometimes questions about the religious views of the Mennonites arose. Local documents occasionally reflect the view that only Catholics or Lutherans should be allowed to hold land in the region; in reality, Mennonites continued to live there and were able to have their own churches and schools. Sometimes negative views circulated, as when a Catholic report issued in the Kulm area described Mennonites as similar to Arians.[56] Perhaps some local priests who complained that Mennonites were remiss in paying assessments to the church colored the report.[57] In spite of this, Mennonites remained in the region and established flourishing communities.

Settlements in the Marienwerder (Kwidzyn) Vicinity

Mennonite settlements in the Marienwerder lowlands were to some extent the product of deliberate policy on the part of the government of Prussia and of King Frederick William I, who was determined to expand his army. The "soldier king" wanted tall Mennonite men to serve in his army,

and when they refused, he ordered the expulsion of Mennonites from his realm in 1724. The expelled Mennonites now moved into Royal Prussia, to villages such as Tragheimerweide (Barcice) and Rudnerweide (Rudniki). Other villages, such as Montauerweide (Mątawskie Pastwiska) and Zieglershuben also now gained numerous Mennonite settlers from Prussia.

This resettlement process in the lowlands west of Marienwerder owed much to Jacob Fadenrecht, a dike supervisor in the Large Werder. He and an associate sold land to the religious refugees for 2,200 Prussian guilders.[58] Farmers from the delta had used the land for cattle grazing. Two leaders among the refugees, Salomon Becker and Jakob Jantzen, arranged the purchase of land where the community later known as Tragheimerweide arose. Other villages in this vicinity were also established at approximately this time. Most of the villagers were Mennonites. For example, all but one of the eleven farmers in Schweingrube (Szwedy) and seventeen of eighteen in Rudnerweide were Mennonites. The villagers were mostly farmers, but a number of them also engaged in crafts, especially linen-weaving.[59]

Apparently, the newcomers also brought a new architectural style to the region. The Mennonites from Prussia introduced the half-timbered, arcaded houses to this area.[60] These houses were often joined to the haymow and barn, and were constructed on the plots of land held by individual farmers. The familiar one-street village, with houses on both sides of the road and the land surrounding the village, was not characteristic of settlements here; Mennonite dwellings were more scattered. Mennonites had introduced a similar pattern in the delta earlier.[61] Other settlements were established, including one on the island Küche (Kuchnia) in the Vistula. Here the earliest settlers were all Mennonites.

Evidently local ecclesiastical authorities were satisfied with the contributions Mennonites made to the community, for in 1728 Bishop Kretkowski of Kulm granted them permission to build their own church, which they renovated and enlarged in 1763.[62] A century later, in 1866 the congregation built a new brick church, and in 1892, installed an organ. The church survived until the end of World War II.

Settlements near Thorn

According to a number of reports, Anabaptists, and perhaps Hutterites from Moravia, began to settle in the Thorn area in the 1530s and 1540s. Some Polish historians have concluded that Mennonites arrived in the Thorn area in the 1530s; some moved farther down the Vistula and settled in villages such as Górsk and Czarnowo,[63] although the extent of a Mennonite presence here remains uncertain. In 1574, the city council of Thorn signed twenty-year leases with the Mennonite farmers and craftsmen.[64] Later, other settlers relocated from farther down the Vistula and eventually a sizable Mennonite community developed.

This promising start encountered opposition in the end of the sixteenth century when an influential Lutheran cleric, Benedict Morgenstern, vigorously denounced Mennonites for their teachings and urged their expulsion.[65] In addition, the council expressed its displeasure that Mennonites declined to bear arms to defend the city.[66] In 1605 the city council declared that "no sectarian or perverter of religion such as an Arian or Anabaptist shall be tolerated."[67]

At this difficult juncture, Mennonites found a friend in the ranks of the nobility. In 1603, the royal administrator of Dybow, just west of Thorn, invited Mennonites to settle on his territory. The villages of Nieder- and Obernessau (Mała and Wielka Nieszawka) now became a largely Mennonite community, with a Mennonite church and school.[68]

Mennonites continued to settle in the region around Dybow. In the middle of the sixteenth century and later, some of them found new homes on the left bank of the Vistula and other nearby places, such as Słońsk, Duliniew, and Brzoza, where a member of the nobility leased them some land.[69] A number of lease agreements between local authorities or other landowners and Mennonites have been preserved in the Toruń archives. Conditions of leases changed little over two centuries. An agreement, dated 18 June 1763, outlined the conditions under which a local noble, Antoni Jozef Dąmski, leased land to Mennonites. For 36,000 złotys per annum, the settlers were given a lease for forty years. They were allowed to fish in the Vistula and to get wood from local forests to build homes and other farm buildings.[70] They were also granted permission to choose their own village mayor. A number of Mennonites also moved onto the nearby Korzeniecer Kämpe, an island in the river.

Former Mennonite Church in Nieszawka. The Mennonite community here often offered housing to persons in transit to Russia.

Later, in 1778, a church was built in Obernessau, but it was destroyed by fire in 1889. In 1890 a new church was dedicated by Elder Hans Foth. The new church had a tower, something not typical of Mennonite churches. Early restrictions had stipulated that churches should look like ordinary houses. A school built and operated by Mennonites served the village Mennonite families, while Lutherans sent their children to a school in another nearby village.[71] However, the area was subject to flooding, so despite financial assistance from fellow believers in the Netherlands, families continued to leave to seek better conditions elsewhere.

From Thorn to Warsaw

In their quest for better economic opportunities, some Mennonites settled in numerous small villages along the Vistula River between Thorn and Warsaw. There were several areas of concentration where they es-

tablished churches and a few villages that were home to predominantly Mennonite inhabitants.

Farther up the river from Thorn, not far from the city of Płock, another congregation developed, with members from a number of nearby villages. This church was located in Deutsch (Nowe) Wymyśle. In the 1760s some Mennonite families emigrated here from Przechówka, the Gruppe-Montau region, and elsewhere, and established a new congregation in Wymyśle. Here early settlers also built a church and school. Fire destroyed the first church, but in 1864 a new concrete-block church with a tin roof took its place. A number of nearby villages, such as Świniary and Zyck on the left side of the river and Wola-Wodzinska on the right, also had significant numbers of Mennonite families. For a time the baptized members of the Mennonite communities near Płock numbered about three hundred, but in the 1870s a significant migration began, mostly to North America.

The renewal movement among Mennonites in Russia that gave birth to the Mennonite Brethren Church in 1860 also had an impact here. The new church group regarded the traditional Mennonite Church as spiritually lethargic. Its call for spiritual renewal reached some Mennonite churches along the Vistula and found a warm reception in several places. Contacts between Mennonites in Russia and in the Wymyśle area eventually led to the formation of a new Mennonite Brethren congregation in the 1880s.

During the same period, the Baptist Church, a newcomer to the region, gained a number of adherents among the Mennonites. In some instances, Baptists and the new Mennonite Brethren formed a joint congregation. One influential Baptist leader was Friedrich Alf, a teacher and a convert from Lutheranism. He won a number of followers from among the Mennonites, especially the Mennonite Brethren. Baptist congregations arose on the right side of the river, in Kicin and in Wola-Wodzinska. Difficulties arose when Johann Penner and Peter Ewert, both former Mennonites who had joined the Baptists, urged Mennonites and Lutherans in the vicinity to join the Baptists and find greater spiritual vitality.[72] Several Mennonites did join the Baptists, but issues such as military service, foot washing, and Mennonite "privileges" remained a barrier to full union. Baptists continued to establish churches in the region and remained in fellowship with the Mennonite Brethren. Joint choir festivals and Bible conferences helped to maintain close ties. Both groups, however, retained

Former Mennonite Church in Wymyśle. Mennonites in Wymyśle were successively under Polish, Prussian, and Russian rule until the village again became a part of the restored state of Poland following World War I.

their own distinct congregations. After a number of Mennonites from this area moved to Russia or America, the few who remained joined the Mennonite church in Deutsch Kazun, discussed below.

In Wymyśle, traditional Mennonites and the new Mennonite Brethren conducted separate church services for a time. Considerable tension developed between the two groups, but eventually joint services were often held. As the number of persons joining the new Mennonite Brethren movement increased, most ministers, including the last elder of the older Mennonite Church, also became part of the new church.[73]

The village of Wymyśle remained almost exclusively Mennonite until the end of World War II, when the inhabitants fled or were expelled.[74] Although they had been living in Poland, which was recreated after World War I, the enmity that arose between Poland and Germany affected Germans living in Poland. Mennonites whose ancestors had come from the Netherlands, various parts of Germany, and Austria had become

Former Mennonite Church in Deutsch Kazun. Now a residence, the former church is in disrepair. The abandoned, overgrown cemetery is on the other side of the nearby highway.

acculturated over the centuries. They saw themselves as German, and the new government saw them as Germans also. Nonetheless, in the turmoil following World War II, some Poles from nearby villages came to the defense of Mennonites. Over the years, good relations and friendships had been formed.[75]

Another of the settlements along the Vistula was Deutsch Kazun, established across the Vistula from the Modlin fortress, north of Warsaw. Church records indicate that a number of families from areas around Kulm, Schwetz, and Graudenz settled here in the 1750s and later. As the community grew, it acquired more land—in one instance, from a Russian general whom the tsar had rewarded for crushing the Kosciuszko revolt.[76] At the same time, the community was subjected to political uncertainty as the region came under different rulers.

In 1823 settlers in Deutsch Kazun received permission to build a

church. This first church was built on a flood plain and was destroyed in a flood in 1891. In 1892, a new church was built in an area sheltered from the Vistula's high water. The church was badly damaged in World War I, but it was rebuilt in 1924. In 1923 a smaller Mennonite Brethren congregation was also organized here. The larger Mennonite church, which had its own cemetery, drew its membership not only from Deutsch Kazun but also from a number of other villages nearby such as Sady, Deutsch Czonstkow, and Dembina. At least one of these smaller communities, Sady, formed its own Mennonite congregation and had a church for a few years. A nearby cemetery served the larger Protestant population, including Mennonites.[77]

The region between Thorn and Warsaw remained under the Polish crown after the first partition of Poland in 1772. The second, in 1793, brought much of this part of Mazovia under Prussian rule. With the third partition in 1795, this region fell to Prussia along with Warsaw. In the Congress of Vienna in 1815, however, Russia successfully claimed Mazovia, including Warsaw, and set up the kingdom of Poland, controlled by the Russian crown. Thus, Deutsch Kazun as well as Deutsch Wymyśle and the various small Mennonite communities along this part of the Vistula were brought under Russian rule. At this time, some members of the community decided to seek greater opportunity either in the new Mennonite colonies being established in the Black Sea area or in America, and they emigrated to those regions. Both Deutsch Kasun and Wymyśle, however, retained Mennonite churches until the end of World War II.

CHAPTER 5

Bridges between the Netherlands & the Vistula Delta

Depicted on the ceiling of the Red Room in Danzig's former city hall is a rainbow uniting Danzig and the Vistula River. The painter, Isaak van den Block, chose this image to portray the city's close tie to the mighty river that had long served as the lifeblood of Poland's commerce. The Vistula, which carried a variety of products from the interior to be shipped to ports throughout the Baltic and North Seas, was at the heart of Poland's prosperity. The hundreds of ships that sailed through the Sound at Elsinore on voyages between Danzig and Amsterdam gave evidence of a powerful economic bond.[1] Grain was by far the most important cargo, making Amsterdam, with Danzig, the "granary of Europe."[2] Nonetheless, although much of that prosperity was generated by the trade with Amsterdam, trade was only one of several bridges between the two cities.

When the Mennonites settled the lands along the Vistula, bridges of faith, kinship, and economic interest spanned the geographical distance between Mennonite fellow believers in the Netherlands and in Royal Prussia.[3] Extensive connections united the two regions, both intensely associated with maritime commerce; however, these commercial relations were only part of the warp and woof of the fabric that bound Amsterdam and Danzig together.

Harbor in Gdańsk. In some years, more than a thousand ships carried a variety of products from here, mostly to the Netherlands.

When Joost van den Vondel, the most noted literary figure of the Netherlands in early modern times, dramatically portrayed this close bond in his early seventeenth-century play *Gijsbrecht van Aemstel*, the partnership between the two centers was taken as an accepted economic and cultural fact. Vondel's work reflected a connection by no means limited to literature, but rather a relationship that was vital to the broad spectrum of civic life of both the Netherlands and Royal Prussia. To speak of a "new Holland" as Gijsbrecht did was no fanciful poetic exaggeration; it mirrored reality. The powerful influence of the Netherlands, especially Amsterdam, on the city on the Vistula was evident in virtually all aspects of the society.[4]

Since early-sixteenth-century Danzig and its environs had experienced a number of challenging and costly events, commerce with Amsterdam was especially desirable. A disgruntled Teutonic Grand Master had tried to reverse history with a futile endeavor to regain territory he had lost

half a century earlier. He failed, but the effort left destruction in its wake. Then additional calamity struck as severe flooding also occurred at this time. In part, this was the result of efforts by local authorities to increase the volume of the Vistula as it flowed into the delta. The intent was to improve shipping conditions, so the entrance into the Nogat was restricted in order to divert additional water to the commercially more important Vistula River. However, the increased volume, combined with heavy runoff, broke the Vistula dikes and caused extensive flooding in the lower elevations in the area.

In the aftermath of these events, the Polish welcomed Dutch and other immigrant settlers, including Mennonites who came to this region beginning in the second third of the sixteenth century. Local authorities were motivated by the prospect of these settlers' bringing this flooded and neglected land into productivity by developing a reliable drainage system of dikes, dams, water runways, and windmills. Many of these newcomers would play a vital role in reshaping the city itself and in bringing a new prosperity to the nearby lowlands of the delta.[5]

So they had come, some seeking religious freedom, others motivated by economic opportunity and offering landowners the possibility of a better return on their lands. As these new settlers established homes on lands owned by the king, lords, cities, or the church, they soon became known for their significant contribution to the economic prosperity of the region. For early Mennonite settlers, this opportunity meant escape from persecution in the Netherlands, where Philip II's drive to rid his lands of heretics still raged. King Władysław IV was only one monarch who acknowledged the agricultural and engineering contributions made by Mennonite immigrants from the Netherlands, who, as shown earlier, "with great effort and at very high cost, made these lands fertile and productive.[6] Most kings of Poland echoed this assessment. Mennonite achievements, however, were by no means limited to agricultural pursuits.

Mennonites, the Arts, and Artisans in Royal Prussia

In few areas of Danzig's life did the Netherlands exert as much influence as in the arts. This is especially evident in the visual arts, painting and sculpture; in engineering; and in architecture, notably in the design of important civic structures and patrician homes.[7] Artists such as Vredeman de

Vries, Isaak van den Block, and Wilhelm Hondius, all from the Netherlands, made their reputations in cities such as Danzig. A number of prominent artists, sculptors, and architects were Mennonites, although it should be noted that archival references to these immigrants or visitors from the Netherlands often give no indication of church affiliation.

Few Dutch immigrants left a mark in Danzig comparable to that of the van den Block family. Wilhelm and his family came from Flanders, having left that region during the persecutions inflicted by the Spanish regime. Apparently, the family first moved to Königsberg, where Wilhelm and his wife had three sons, all given Old Testament names: Abraham, Isaak, and Jacob. The influence of these three on Danzig is still very evident today. At the same time, their talents, along with those of their father, were by no means restricted to opportunities in that city. In Königsberg, Wilhelm was commissioned to chisel a stone monument for Margrave George Frederick; similarly, in Siebenbürgen (Transylvania), he created a stone epitaph for the brother of King Stefan Bathory. However, it was in Danzig that he created his most noteworthy works of art, beginning in 1584. Inspired by a gate in Antwerp, Wilhelm created a façade and capitals for the High, or Highland Gate. His work gave this impressive entrance to the city an appearance of beauty, history, and power. With this majestic statement, Wilhelm gained a reputation that brought him invitations from other cities and royal courts as well as further opportunities in Danzig. Here he designed a number of facades for homes of patricians or important structures in the city, such as the residence of the abbot of Pelplin. Such prominent assignments were ordinarily reserved for citizens. In Wilhelm's case, his stature led the city to make this exception, since as a Mennonite he was not eligible to become a citizen.[8] When he died in 1628, he was buried in St. Mary's Church in Danzig.[9]

Wilhelm's creative genius lived on in his sons, Abraham, Isaak, and Jacob. Abraham gained favorable notice when, as an assistant to the noted architect Anthony van Obbergen, he created the ornamental facade of the armory in Danzig. After van Obbergen's death in 1611, Abraham was commissioned to give the Long Street (Ulica Długa) a fitting gate. The result was the Golden Gate, built in the Italian Renaissance style. Like other rich Renaissance cities, Danzig proudly portrayed itself in terms of classical mythology and biblical imagery. Abraham's artistic creativity emphasized the city's grandeur and sought to inculcate civic virtue along

The Golden Gate. This gate marked the beginning of the "Royal Route" into the city of Gdańsk.

with religious belief. The inscription above the portal of the Golden Gate, which opened onto the "Royal Route," reflected this mixture of civic pride and biblical allusion: "They shall prosper that love you. Let there be peace within your walls and prosperity within your palaces" (Psalm 122).[10] This entrance depicted the self-assurance and confidence so characteristic of Danzig's society.

Abraham van den Block also provided a new facade for the Artushof on the Long Market (Długi Targ), the heart of the city's commercial and financial life. Corinthian pilasters, gold ornamentation, images from classical mythology, and likenesses of prominent Danzig families evoked a spirit of optimism that seemed natural in a city that dominated the Baltic trade. He created the design for the Neptune fountain at the entrance to the Artushof as well. The bronze statue, cast in Augsburg, reminded all visitors that Danzig was inextricably tied to the sea. Abraham also did several noted epitaphs in St. Mary's as well as in Oliva Cathedral. One report states that the city was so impressed with him that it made an exception and granted him citizenship.[11]

Isaak van den Block established himself as a painter. The paintings on the ceiling of the Red Room in the former city hall in Danzig demonstrate his power and creativity as an artist. Especially striking is the oval work of art in the center of the ceiling. With a rainbow, or "heavenly arc," as the inscription reads, in the background, the painting depicts the arm of God reaching down to grasp the spire of city hall while merchants and members of the city council confidently go about their business. A meandering Vistula reminds the viewer that the river is the life-giving artery of the city. In other rooms of city hall, Isaak van den Block created similar paintings on canvas as he depicted the pulsating life of the commercial heart of the Baltic. Frequently, he selected stories from the Old Testament to portray the city's remarkable ability to combine religious self-perceptions with economic prosperity.

Jacob, Willem's third son, served as architect for a number of special structures in Copenhagen, where he helped create a triumphal arch for a coronation. In Königsberg, he served as an architect for the ducal court and also held a similar position in Elbing. In Danzig he designed the impressive crowning structure of the massive tower of St. Catherine's Church and a part of the roof and gable for the Artushof. He also created designs for altars and chapels in several Danzig churches.[12]

Other Dutch artists and architects added to the dominant artistic influence from the Netherlands. Wilhelm Hondius created portraits of King Władysław IV and other members of the royal family, of Polish magnates, and of Danzig patricians. He also gained fame through his maps and engravings of cities as well as engravings for the title pages of many books. The sculptor Willem van der Meer created the strikingly graceful and beautiful fireplace for the Red Room in the city hall. The Dutch fourteen-bell carillon in the city hall tower was also his design.[13]

Few of the artists and architects coming to Danzig from the Netherlands established a reputation equal to that of Anthony van Obbergen. In 1573 a number of Mennonites were banished from Antwerp, and some eventually found a new home in the northern areas of the Netherlands, where Spanish rule had been broken. These included Hans van Obbergen, almost certainly the father of Anthony.[14] Anthony van Obbergen was invited to build or reshape some of Danzig's most important buildings, including the Old City (Stare Miasto) town hall. Its sculptures, corner towers, gables, and entry portal demonstrate Obbergen's sensitivity to

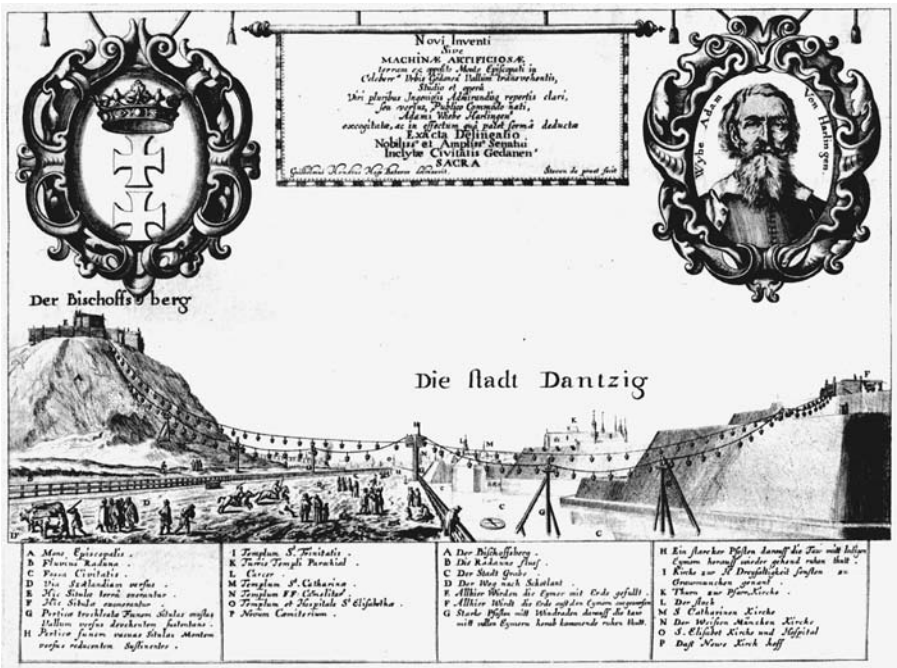
artistic harmony. As city architect, he worked on the city's outer fortifications, incorporating many beautiful gates into its earthen walls.[15] Obbergen also designed and supervised the construction of the new armory, one of Danzig's most striking Renaissance structures. Not surprisingly, his fame brought him invitations from many other cities and states. Nonetheless, he chose to devote most of his time to Danzig, his adopted city, where he died in 1611.

Danzig's reliance on Dutch expertise continued in engineering. Early in the seventeenth century Adrian Oldbrantsen and Wilm Jansen Benningen, both from Alkmaar, came to rechannel the Mottlau River and build a lock where it entered the city.[16] Another Dutch engineer, Cornelis van dem Bosch, designed fortifications for the right side of the stream.[17] Then, when the city was threatened during the Polish-Swedish war in the 1620s, the city again decided to strengthen its fortifications. Once more, Danzig turned to the Netherlands and invited a Dutch engineer, Peter Jansen de Weert, to ring the city with a strengthened wall and numerous bastions. When De Weert died before he could finish the assignment, the city turned as before to the Netherlands. This time, Adam Wiebe, a Mennonite from Harlingen who had earlier come to develop a water system for the city center, continued building the walls. In the process, he developed a suspended cable-car system to transport earth from the nearby Bishop's Hill to the new walls and thus became the inventor of an important transportation method for use in large construction projects.[18]

Dutch Intervention in Danzig Economic Issues

Interaction between the Netherlands and Danzig extended to virtually all aspects of life. Hundreds of craftsmen from the Netherlands in a variety of crafts created a cosmopolitan atmosphere.[19] Polish nobles and urban patricians provided a ready market for hand-made clocks, fancy cloth, *Goldwasser*, and dozens of specialty products. Frequently, however, the industrious newcomers aroused the ire of Danzig guilds that resented the competition.[20] At times, as in the situation below, the Netherlands intervened on behalf of the Danzig Mennonites.

Mennonites were sometimes described as weeds that were being protected and cultivated by the city council.[21] For decades, the city council, aware of the financial gain brought to the city by the Mennonites, rejected



Sketch of Adam Wiebe's cable car (Curicke, *Historische Beschreibung*). Wiebe's invention greatly facilitated the moving of earth to build bastions.

the demands of the guilds and the pressures of pamphleteers, but eventually the king intervened. In 1750, in a significant departure from past royal policy, King Augustus III issued a decree imposing new financial obligations on Mennonites and barring masters from teaching the skill of making braid and lace to any Mennonite boy.[22] Some in Danzig deplored such action as unethical.[23] Even then, however, more than two centuries after Mennonites had begun leaving the Netherlands to find a new home in Royal Prussia, ties with the previous homeland remained strong. At the request of Dutch Mennonite congregations, the government of the Netherlands appealed directly to the Danzig city council. The Dutch commissioner there, Dirk van Bleyswyck, urged the council to take action to ameliorate unjust treatment of the Mennonites.[24] At the same time, Danzig was proud of its long tradition of being able to shape its own policies. Good relations with the Netherlands and other countries were important, but authority to make final decisions was carefully guarded.

Bonds of Mutual Aid and Cooperation

The Danzig-Netherlands ties also included development of social and cultural institutions. When Danzig decided to explore new avenues in treatment of crime, it looked to Amsterdam. There, the *Rasphuis*, a Dutch experiment in social engineering that sought to combine retribution with rehabilitation, provided a setting where men could learn a skill while incarcerated. A similar facility, the *Spinhuis*, was later constructed for women. These institutions became models for Danzig, which also patterned a code of regulations after the one developed in Amsterdam.[25]

The scope of Dutch influence in Danzig and its environs in economic, social, civic, and cultural arenas was significant indeed. And in all of them, Mennonites played a role, even if sometimes only a small one. But for those Mennonites who left the Netherlands to seek a new home along the Vistula, the religious ties long remained the central connection.

Few aspects of the life of the new congregations in Royal Prussia remained untouched by the caring communities in the Netherlands, for social ties between the Netherlands and emigrants from there remained strong. Marriage frequently involved partners from both regions. Records show that in the seventeenth century, at least 145 brides and 601 bridegrooms from Danzig came to Amsterdam to marry their partners.[26] Although the documents do not always list the religious affiliation of the participants, the association between the terms "Dutch" and "Mennonite" must have been close. One historian contends that in Royal Prussia the two were often regarded as synonymous.[27]

Mennonites in the Netherlands and in Royal Prussia shared various aspects of congregational life. Church leaders exchanged visits in order to assist each other in dealing with church problems or simply to strengthen doctrinal and fellowship ties. It was a two-way relationship, with Royal Prussian Mennonites exerting influence on Dutch Mennonite congregations as well. At one point, Mennonites in Amsterdam and Rotterdam wrote to the Danzig Mennonites and requested them to send an elder to provide leadership. Similarly, church leaders from the Netherlands came to minister in Royal Prussia. Political boundaries did not prevent exchange between churches.[28] Such demonstrations of shared spiritual ministry continued throughout the Polish period and on into the Prussian time. Thus, in 1774, when Elder Heinrich Donner was confronted with

a question of doctrinal practice, he appealed to the model of the Dutch Mennonites.[29] His approach was typical of the sharing that united the two areas.

Although help and counsel flowed both ways, recipients were not always ready to accept advice. In 1615 several churches in Royal Prussia wrote to Mennonites in the Netherlands and urged them to resolve divisions and disputes among themselves.[30] Apparently the Dutch Mennonites were less than enthusiastic about the spiritual counseling received from Royal Prussia; they now chose representatives to go to the Mennonite congregations in the Vistula Delta to enlighten them about the real situation in Amsterdam. Even if Dutch congregations were not always eager to accept advice and discipline from congregations in Royal Prussia, the event demonstrates strong mutual concern.

In both countries, Mennonites attempted to transcend political boundaries. Throughout most of the sixteenth and much of the seventeenth centuries, Mennonites in the Netherlands and in Royal Prussia together tried to assist their co-religionists in other lands. Efforts were made at congregational and government levels, for example, when fellow believers were harshly treated in Switzerland, where authorities still resorted to burning of "heretics" as late as the early seventeenth century. For Mennonites in the Netherlands and in Royal Prussia, such policies provided another opportunity to show that bonds of faith and mutual concern were stronger than political barriers.[31] Not surprisingly, some refugees from Switzerland and parts of Germany fled to Royal Prussia and joined Mennonite congregations there.

Frequently, those in need of aid were the Royal Prussian Mennonites themselves. Despite skilled water engineering, the Vistula and its tributaries often played havoc with the intentions of those trying to create arable land from marshes and flooded lowlands in the Vistula Delta. Letters sent to the Netherlands witnessed to the ongoing distress created by ravaging waters but also to the generosity of friends in the Netherlands. Thus in 1677, as on numerous other occasions, Mennonites in the Large Werder wrote to their fellow believers in the Netherlands asking them to provide financial assistance in response to flooding that had robbed them of their livelihood.[32] The letter specifically directed to the congregation *bij het Lam* in Amsterdam, elicited strong support.[33] Such pleas for assistance seemed to come regularly and from various congregations. Nor were

the requests only from Mennonites in the delta. Another letter, sent from the Montau congregation, reported that members had to seek new shelter because of flooding. This time both the *bij het Lam* and the *bij de Zon* congregations were approached by the distressed church along the Vistula asking for a response to this critical need.[34] Such flooding occurred rather frequently; a decade later the Mennonite congregation in Elbing wrote to Amsterdam, explaining that the devastation of war, coupled with flooding, had placed the Elbing Mennonites in a precarious position.[35]

Even though the Dutch Mennonites were very generous in their support, they were careful to follow procedures that recognized the congregation or group, not individuals, as the appropriate channel for the distribution of material aid. When the noted Elder Heinrich Donner of the Orlofferfelde congregation wrote that he personally had suffered greatly because of flooding and would very much appreciate some direct financial assistance, the commission's response was that it felt aid should be channeled through the congregation for distribution. Writing directly to Donner, the commission stated that it did not feel free to help individual persons and restated that the congregation must be the recipient and the distributor of aid.[36] Simultaneously, the commission expressed its enthusiasm for working directly with the congregations. This policy had proved workable and sufficiently equitable to be reaffirmed and maintained. Much of the aid, especially in the first two centuries of Mennonite life in Royal Prussia, came in the form of financial gifts. In later years, assistance was often in the form of loans, with little or no interest. The Dutch proved to be generous lenders, permitting the borrowers to extend the period of the loan if difficulties arose. In a not unusual case, a loan made in 1770 was still being repaid in 1805.[37]

Flooding was by no means the only difficulty that challenged the Mennonites. As indicated earlier, intolerant policies in the neighboring Ducal Prussia added to the distress of Mennonites in Royal Prussia. Thus, when Frederick William I, ruler of Prussia and Brandenburg, ordered Mennonites expelled in 1724, joint efforts between Mennonites in the Netherlands and in Hamburg provided funds to help the homeless Mennonites acquire new lands and dwellings in Royal Prussia. Dutch Mennonites expressed concern for those expelled because of their beliefs and requested that funds sent be used to help all those in need.[38] The expulsion order of 1724 was applied only in a limited area of the kingdom, and soon

more Mennonites came to Königsberg and the Tilsit rural area. When the drama was replayed in 1732, the order was more rigorously enforced. Once again, fellow-Mennonites in the Netherlands and Hamburg gathered and sent funds to help, expressly stating that anyone in need should be helped.

Such practical demonstrations of mutual support for anyone in distress in a community, irrespective of religious affiliations, also helped to bridge confessional differences. In 1737 a letter from Pieter Becker, a Danzig Mennonite, to the Mennonite church in Groningen gratefully acknowledged the financial assistance sent earlier and then also noted a remarkable consequence of this generosity. The funds had been distributed to "all poor people without regard to belief." Lutherans and Catholics, as well as Mennonites, had received assistance. In a remarkable gesture that transcended religious barriers, letters of thanks from the pastor of the Lutheran parish as well as "prominent Catholic leaders" in the vicinity were enclosed.[39]

On other occasions, ties between Dutch and Royal Prussian Mennonite congregations helped the latter to cope with local religious restrictions. The city of Danzig had tried to stop rebaptism of those who converted to the Mennonite faith, so converts might be sent to Amsterdam to be baptized on profession of their faith.[40] This practice was followed well into the eighteenth century.[41] Frequent visits between the church leaders from the two areas solidified such cooperation.

Although economic factors provided powerful bonds, the strongest ties forged between the new settlers in the Vistula Delta and the Mennonites in the Netherlands were those of faith and religious practice. Four centuries later, Erich Göttner, the last pastor to serve the Mennonite congregation in Danzig, described the interdependence of Mennonite congregations in the Netherlands and in Royal Prussia as follows:

> For two centuries Mennonites in the Vistula area maintained close bonds with their fellow-believers in the Netherlands. Many elders were called from their Dutch congregations. Thus, Jan Gerrits from Emden, who served as a preacher in the Groningen and Haarlem churches, came to Danzig in 1607 to serve as the first elder of the Frisian Mennonite Church here. Until 1760, a continuous stream of candidates for baptism traveled from Danzig to the Netherlands to be baptized there. For more than 200 years sermons in the Danzig Mennonite Church were

> preached in Dutch, where Dutch hymnals and Dutch catechisms were also used. Similarly, in times of material need, as in times of war or flooding in the Vistula and Nogat areas, the Dutch Mennonites did not forget their brothers and sisters in the faith. From another perspective, some Old Flemish churches in Amsterdam, Haarlem and Rotterdam felt spiritually so close to the Danzig Flemish Mennonite Church that they called themselves Danzig churches.[42]

His words sum up a relationship that endured as long as there were Mennonite churches in the Vistula Delta.

CHAPTER 6

Psalms, Sermons, and Congregations

"Worthy brothers and sisters in the Lord, . . . the love of God admonishes its neighbor in pure love, comforts those of little faith, raises the weak, teaches the foolish, rebukes the delinquent . . . receives the destitute, clothes the naked, feeds the hungry, . . . visits the sick. Its resources are ready to serve all people." As early as 1549, Menno Simons penned these phrases to set the tone for Mennonites living in the Vistula Delta. In a letter to fellow believers in "Prussia," he discussed an earlier visit and then spoke as a pastor to those living in the region. Church life and faith were to be central to the Mennonite communities. They were to exemplify their faith in everyday life and in bearing witness to their neighbors.[1] Shortly thereafter, Dirk Philips, already a leading champion of Mennonites in the Netherlands, came to provide spiritual oversight for the emerging Mennonite congregation in Danzig.[2]

Early records of Mennonite life in the delta, whether on farms or in towns and cities, show that forming a congregation was always one of the first tasks undertaken by a group of new settlers. Church leaders were chosen; worship meetings, at first in homes, were quickly established as a central part of the life of the community. The early settlers brought Dutch versions of Scripture as well as Dutch hymnbooks.

Both Flemish and Frisian Mennonite congregations arose in the cities and in the delta, thus maintaining the distinctions that had arisen in the

Netherlands.[3] Each group had a church in the Danzig area. Although the two groups often worked together when dealing with political and ecclesiastical authorities, they maintained their separate identities throughout the period of Polish rule in the delta. Degrees of cooperation varied, and joint ventures were frequently undertaken. Distinctives that had arisen, shaped by geographical, linguistic, and church polity issues, long continued to prevent a full union. Strong leaders also emerged in both groups and felt little need to remove all barriers to complete unity. Moreover, sister churches in the Netherlands maintained similar distinctives but also engaged in a variety of joint endeavors.

Church Buildings

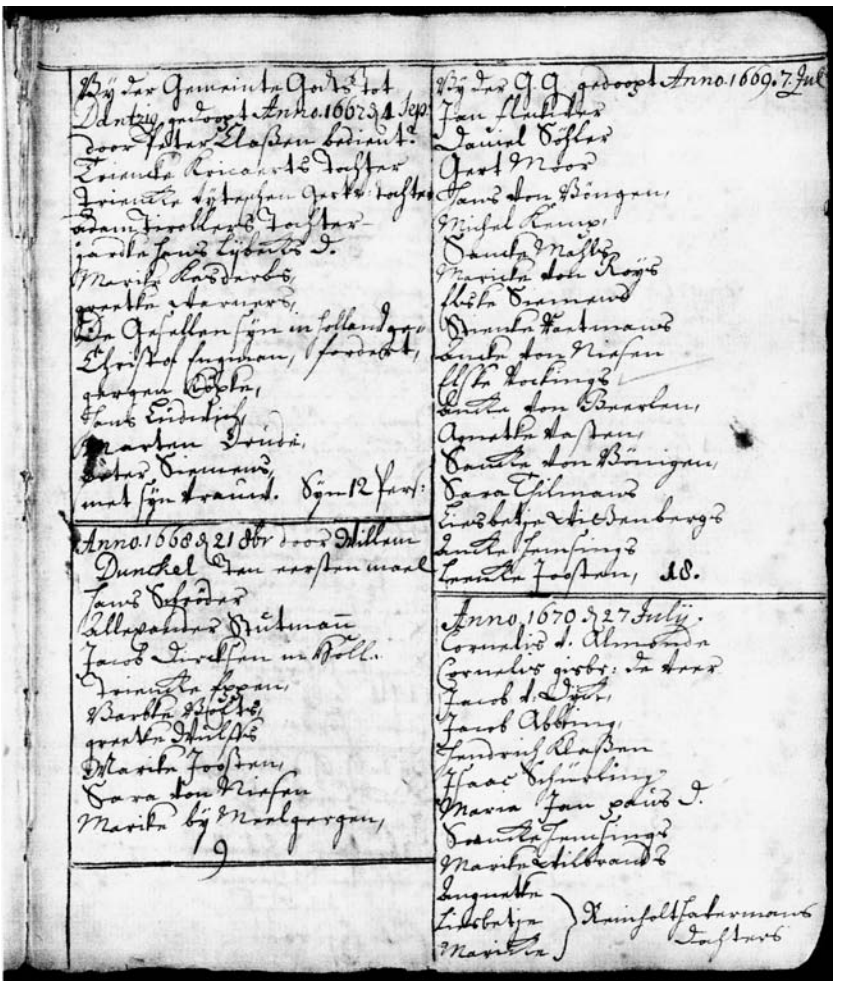
From their earliest days in Royal Prussia, Mennonites established communities of faith even though they were not yet allowed to have their own church buildings. Early records refer to meetings in homes, usually in small groups so that such worship and fellowship gatherings would be less obtrusive. In this, Mennonites were not alone, for early Lutheran congregations faced similar opposition from Catholic authorities and local priests. These Lutherans lived in what were still Catholic parishes and also met in homes and barns. In one instance, they remodeled a granary as their church.[4] Their strong position in cities notwithstanding, Lutherans were not guaranteed the right to build churches freely in the delta. The same regulations applied to Mennonites.

Permission to build churches varied from jurisdiction to jurisdiction and had to be obtained from the relevant ecclesiastical authorities. This could involve a great deal of negotiation, for land ownership varied throughout the region. Some lands belonged to the crown; others belonged to the Catholic Church and were controlled by bishops and other members of the hierarchy. Cities such as Danzig, Elbing, and Thorn as well as nobles also owned land, so various authorities needed to be consulted.

In Danzig, Mennonites met in homes for a century before they received permission to have a church building. As noted earlier, it was not until 1638 (for the Frisians) and 1648 (for the Flemish group) that the two bodies were given permission to build churches. By city instruction, the church structures had to have the outward appearance of a house, since Mennonites were not one of the "officially recognized" religious bodies.

That privilege was held only by Catholics and Lutherans—until pressure from Calvinists forced the city to recognize them as well. Many of the members of both churches lived nearby on land they had leased from the city or from Catholic bishops, abbots, or abbesses.

The two Mennonite congregations continued as separate entities until both church buildings were destroyed (again) in the Napoleonic wars



Flemish Mennonite Church record, Danzig, 1667 (Mennonite Historical Library and Archives, Bethel College). This baptismal record of the Flemish congregation was salvaged from the badly damaged church building after World War II.

early in the nineteenth century. Then, in 1808, the two congregations united and purchased land between the Radaune Canal and Bishop's Hill. Here, on land that provided a beautiful view over the city, they built first a hospice for the poor in 1817 and then a church in 1818–19. Members insisted that a home for the poor was an essential part of living their faith.[5] The church, built with substantial financial assistance from congregations in the Werder,[6] still stands and continues to serve as a church. Simultaneously with the churches in the Danzig suburbs, congregations formed in the delta as well as up the Vistula valley.

Government policies in religious matters were often far from consistent. In 1660 the Danzig city council temporarily prohibited the holding of Mennonite church services in the nearby Danzig Werder.[7] Nonetheless, just a few years later Catholic clerics conducted an examination of Mennonite teachings in Danzig and agreed that their church services were acceptable.

Several congregations had received permission to build churches before Danzig Mennonites were permitted to do so. Thus, in the village of Montau in the vicinity of Kulm, Mennonites were allowed to build their first church in the Vistula valley as early as 1586.[8] Just a few years later, Elbing Mennonites were allowed to build the first Mennonite city church in 1590. This structure served until 1900, when a new one was built. In a rather remarkable course of events, both buildings survived the destruction of World War II. The older building is now an apartment-business complex; the newer church serves a Polish National Catholic congregation. Meanwhile, rural Mennonites living on their farms in the Ellerwald had also built a church. It had its own cemetery and viewed itself as a sister church of the city congregation.

Long after Mennonites in Danzig and Elbing and in the Vistula valley south to Thorn had built their own churches, Mennonites in the delta were still meeting in homes. Only gradually did these congregations receive permission to build their own churches, and then with strict specifications. Mennonites living on crown lands in the delta, where Catholic episcopal authority was often strong, might have to wait indefinitely for permission to build churches. Thus, not until 1768 did four of the largest Mennonite congregations in the delta receive such permission.

Precise dates for the building of the earliest Mennonite churches in the Large Werder are difficult to determine. Records show that two Frisian

The first Mennonite church built in Elbing. From 1590 until 1900 Mennonites worshipped in this building, the first urban Mennonite church in Royal Prussia.

churches in the Large Werder were destroyed or badly damaged by flooding in 1678,[9] but earlier construction dates are vague. Another record indicates that in 1728 an enlarged church was built to replace a smaller one in the Danzig Werder. In this instance, Felix Kretkowski, bishop of Kulm granted the Mennonite request for permission to build a church, thus providing interesting commentary on the attitude of the bishop. He observed that, for no justifiable reasons, Catholic priests had been disturbing Mennonite worship services. In a remarkable declaration of religious tolera-

tion, he stated that such disturbances were to stop and that Mennonites should be free to conduct their own worship services, baptisms, and other religious rites. Furthermore, the bishop noted that Lutheran clerics were also expected to honor these stipulations.[10] Such remarkable latitude suggests that the bishop was on very good terms with the Mennonites.

Other congregations, such as the large Frisian group centered in Orlofferfelde, received permission to build a church only in 1751. In this instance, the cost of building the Mennonite church was only 2,000 florins, but obtaining permission to build required payments to the Catholic hierarchy and local priests amounted to 4,000 florins.[11] Evidently, obtaining permission to build a church might be determined by primarily economic factors. In a similar manner, when the congregations in Fürstenwerder, Heubuden, Ladekopp, and Tiegenhagen requested and received episcopal consent for building churches in 1768, they had to agree to build a chapel for the Catholic cemetery in Petershagen.[12] Permission to build these four churches came with prescribed dimensions as well as some building specifications. These projected structures were to have the appearance of homes, not churches. The congregations expanded their capacities by constructing balconies at both ends of the churches. Additionally, land was reserved for cemeteries near the churches. It was also customary to plant shade trees, and since worshippers came by wagon or carriage, there were long rails where horses could be tied. Most churches also had an adjacent small building that served as a cloakroom.

Cemeteries were often established close to Mennonite church buildings. In addition, numerous other villages had cemeteries where Mennonite church members might be buried, even though these villages had no Mennonite church. This was the case in Wengeln and in Markushof, though Markushof once had a church building that was destroyed by flooding.

Worship Practices

Since most settlers came from the Netherlands, church services were often patterned after those in Dutch Mennonite churches, with singing at the beginning of the service, prayers, scripture reading, a sermon, and then some more singing. Menno Simons placed much emphasis on the Scriptures, as his writings demonstrate. Early settlers brought Bibles and song-

Former Mennonite church in Fürstenwerder. Built in 1768, the structure was destroyed by fire in 1991.

Former Mennonite church in Heubuden, a casualty of World War II. A significant number of its members had moved to the United States in the 1870s.

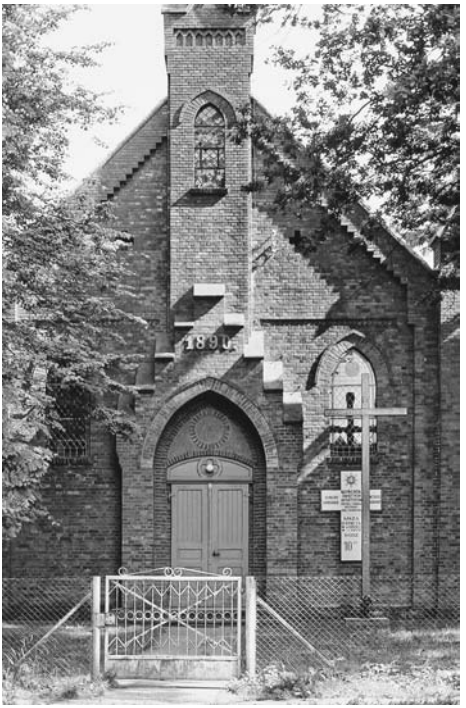
Former Mennonite church in Ladekopp, a thriving Mennonite center until 1945.

Former Mennonite church in Tiegenhagen. As a structure below sea level, it was badly damaged by flooding when protective dikes were cut at the end of World War II.

Former Mennonite church in Gdańsk. Badly damaged in World War II, it was restored and today serves a Pentecostal congregation.

Former Mennonite church in Elbląg. Long a center of Mennonite church life in the eastern part of the delta, this church today serves a Polish National Catholic congregation.

Former Mennonite church in Rozgart. Once a focus of Mennonite church life in the Little Werder, this church today is home to a Catholic congregation.



Former Mennonite church in Mątawy. This former center of Mennonite life in the Vistula valley now serves a Catholic congregation.

books with them. Local laws in Danzig barred Mennonites from printing religious literature, but this restriction could be evaded by having books printed elsewhere. In 1598 Quirin Vermeulen, a successful businessman and leader in the Flemish Mennonite church in Danzig, avoided the city's prohibition by financing the printing of Dutch Bibles in Haarlem. This version was generally known as the "Biestkens Bible," after Nikolaes Biestkens, a Dutch Mennonite printer in Emden who specialized in printing Bibles and Mennonite writings. In the Vistula Delta, however, it was commonly called the "Schottland Bible" because the Bible's frontispiece stated that it could be bought from Vermeulen *bij Schottland*."[13]

Worship styles must have varied from congregation to congregation and from region to region, since both political and religious authorities issued directives designed to place limitations on worship services. In some instances singing was avoided to ensure that neighbors or other churches would not be antagonized,[14] but for most congregations, music was an important element in worship.

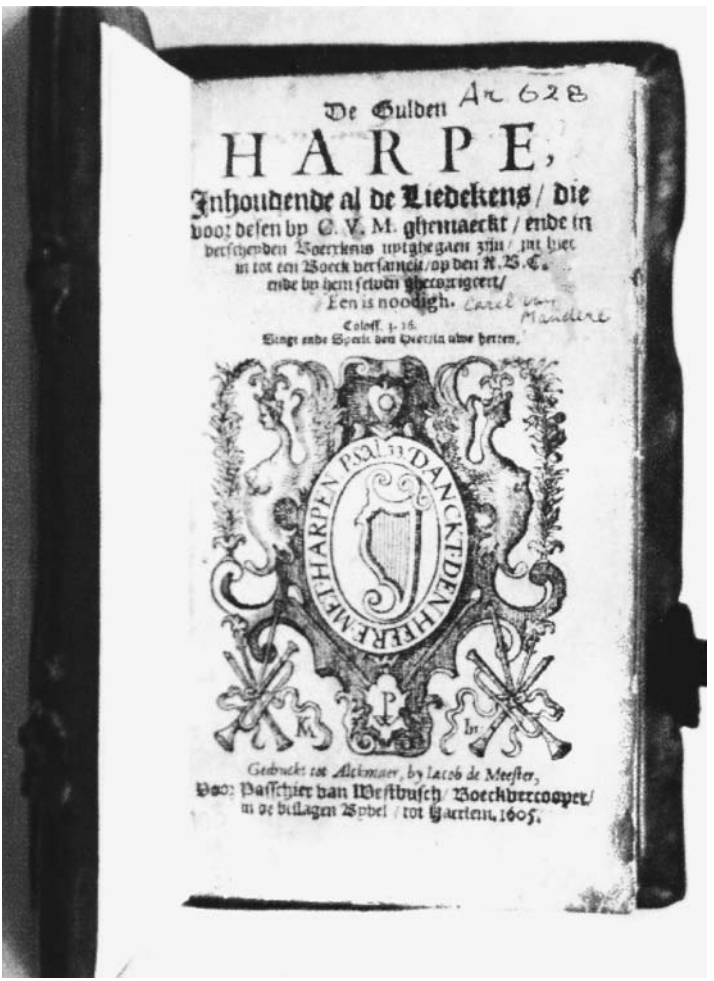
Church singing in the early Mennonite congregations in Royal Prussia not only reflected the continuation of worship practices brought from the Netherlands but also included Psalms and songs from Lutheran and Reformed traditions. A chronicler reported that a number of small Dutch hymnals were used.[15] References to services in some churches show that a number of congregations used *De Gulden Harpe* (The Golden Harp),[16] with many hymns composed by the Dutch Mennonite artist and musician Karel van Mander.[17] The first edition appeared in 1599, followed by others. The editions of 1620 and 1627 were used by the Flemish Mennonite Church in Danzig and probably elsewhere as well. Mennonite congregations in Royal Prussia also used several other hymnals that were printed in the Netherlands. Among these were *Sommige andactige . . . Liedekens*, printed in 1597, and *Pruys Liedt-Boeck* (1604). These hymnals included metrical Psalms and a number of texts written by Mennonites. Tunes were often adapted from various sources, including Lutheran hymns as well as other sacred and secular melodies.[18] Dutch influence must have remained strong during the early eighteenth century, for in 1724 and again in 1752, a Dutch hymnal was published in Amsterdam, expressly designed for use in churches in Royal Prussia.[19]

Later, as German became the language of worship, the *Geistreiches Gesangbuch . . . der Mennonitischen Gemeine in und vor der Stadt Danzig* (1780)

Heb. 9. 8.
De weech der heyligheyt
DEN
BYBEL
Dat is
De Boecken der heyligher Schrifturen / uytten oirspronckelijcken Hebreuschen ende Grieckschen ghetrouwelick verduytscht.
Met verklaringhe duystere woorden, redenen, spreucken, ende verscheydenen lesinghe: die in andere loosticke overseringhe ghevonden worden / ende hier tot dienst vande God-vruchtigen aen de cant gheset.
ROM. 15, 4.
Al wat te voren gheschreven is, dat is tot onser leere geschreven, op dat wy door lijdsaemheyt ende vermoedinge der Schrifturen een hope hebben.
2. Timoth. 3, 14.
Blijft ghy in't gene dat ghy geleert hebt / ende dat u toebetrout is / wetende van wien ghy het ghyleert hebt; Ende dat ghy van uwer kindtheyt af / de H. Schrifturen gheweten hebt, de welcke u can onderwysen ter salicheyt door het ghelooue dat in Christo Jesu is: want alle Schrift van God ingegeven / is tot leeringhe, tot straffinghe / tot beteringe tot onderwysinghe in ghereghtigheyt: op dat de menschen Gods volcomen sy tot alle goede wercken wel onderwesen.
Men vindtse te coop by Reyn Vermeulen / de jonghe Cramer / woonende opte lege zijdt van Schotlandt, by Danswyck. 1598.
Exod 12. 19
2 Reg. 2. 22
Exod 14. 22
Num. 21.

Dutch Bible used in Danzig (Library, University of Amsterdam). The printing of this Dutch translation was funded by the Danzig Mennonite minister and businessman Quirin Vermeulen.

gained acceptance as the preferred hymnal.[20] First published in Königsberg in 1767, it was widely used in Royal Prussia. Later, as many Mennonites moved to Russia and elsewhere, this songbook accompanied them and remained important in their worship services and in homes.[21] Other hymnals also appeared, such as the *Gesangbuch, worinn eine Sammlung aus denen 150. Psalmen Davids . . . ,*" published in Elbing in 1794.[22] Numer-


De Gulden Ar 628
HARPE,
Inhoudende al de Liedekens / die
voor desen by C. V. M. ghemaeckt / ende in
verschenden Boecken uytghegaen zijn / nu hier
in tot een Boeck vergadert / op den R. Psalter /
ende by hem selven ghecorrigeert /
Een is noodigh. Carel van Mander
Coloss. 3. 16.
Singet ende Spelet den Heere in uwe herten.
PSALM DANCKT DEN HERRE MET HARPEN
Gedruckt tot Alckmaer, by Iacob de Meester,
voor Passchier van Westbusch / Boeckvercooper /
in de stillagen Bybel / tot Haerlem, 1605.

Seventeenth-century Dutch hymnal (Radbout University, Nijmegen). Karel van Mander's *de Gulden Harpe* was one of the Dutch hymnals used by Mennonites in Royal Prussia.

Geiſtreiches

Geſangbuch,

zur

öffentlichen und beſondern Erbauung

der

Mennonitiſchen Gemeine

in und vor der Stadt Danzig.

Marienwerder

gedruckt bey Johann Jacob Kanter,

Königl. Weſt-Preuß. Hofbuchdrucker.

1780.

German hymnal published in 1780 (Library, Polish Academy of Sciences, Gdańsk). As German replaced Dutch, hymnals such as this *Geistreiches Gesangbuch* were used.

ous editions were issued. In 1851 the Danzig Mennonite Church, feeling that the *Geistreiches Gesangbuch* had become dated, appointed eight church members to issue a new hymnal, which appeared in 1854 as the *Gesangbuch zur kirchlichen und häuslichen Erbauung für Mennonitengemeinden.*[23]

In the second half of the eighteenth century, some churches began to use organs in services. The Frisian church in Danzig installed an organ in 1778; the Flemish church did so in 1806.[24] A number of churches in the delta did not adopt the use of organs until the latter part of the nineteenth century. The delay apparently was due to concern about the weakening of congregational singing if organs were used.[25]

In 1723 Abraham Hartwich, a Lutheran pastor, described Mennonite services as consisting of sermons preached in Dutch or Low German and singing of "Psalms and Lutheran songs."[26] Ministers usually sat in a row on a slightly elevated platform on one side of the room. The minister presenting the sermon might stand and speak freely from a text, or he might read the sermon. According to Hartwich, Flemish ministers often preached while seated, while Frisian ministers tended to stand.

When communion took place, it followed the sermon. Often the *Vermahner* (exhorter or minister) would break off pieces of bread and give them to participants as they came forward to the communion table. Deacons would then carry the wine to the participants. However, in some instances, the communicants came forward and broke off pieces of bread from the loaf on a table. Hartwich, reporting on congregations that had not yet been allowed to build churches, noted that these church services were conducted in homes in the winter, and in haymows or barns, freshly cleaned, in summer. He also observed that sermons tended to be long, sometimes lasting for several hours.

Language Transition: From Dutch to German

Until about the middle of the eighteenth century, church services in Danzig and much of the delta were mostly in Dutch. Transition to German varied from area to area. In most churches, the transition from Dutch to German was a process that continued over decades. In some instances, it was the settlers who came from Moravia or from German states and joined the Dutch congregations who accelerated the transition. While some areas moved quickly to German, the Danzig Flemish Mennonite Church

retained Dutch in its services longer than most. This was because of views held by ministers such as Hans van Steen, as well as close business and church ties with the Netherlands. Not until 19 September 1762, when Gerhard Wiebe from Elbing visited, was a German sermon given in the Danzig Flemish Mennonite Church.[27] It took another five years before a second sermon was given in German, this time by Cornelius Regehr, a visiting minister from Heubuden.[28] Soon thereafter, however, German replaced Dutch. When a new hymnal was printed in 1780, the transition to German was apparently largely complete, as the editor of the hymnal explained in an introduction: although "from earliest days our church services have been held in the Dutch language," now the widespread use of the German made the language change necessary.

Church Leadership

Mennonite church government was congregational, led by *Lehrer* (teachers), the lay ministers and elders. As a rule, congregations had lay ministers as well as an elder or bishop, who presided at baptisms and communion services. For a time the Flemish elder for Mennonites in Danzig also served the congregations in the lowlands. However, with the growth of the outlying congregations, a new elder was chosen in 1639. This minister, Hans Siemens, became elder of the Flemish church in the Large Werder. Then, with further expansion, Jacob Dieck, a minister in the Heubuden congregation, was chosen as elder also. Eventually, to provide more efficient administration and ministry, the Flemish Mennonite congregations in the Large Werder were divided into four parishes (*Quartiere*): Rosenort, Tiegenhagen, Ladekopp, and Fürstenwerder. Over time, new congregations arose and were attached to one of these parishes and its respective elder.

Frisian Mennonites had policies similar to those of Flemish congregations, although there were differences in matters of church discipline, styles of dress, and intermarriage. One major center for the Frisians was the Orlofferfelde congregation in the Large Werder, whose leading minister also served as elder. Another center was the Markushof congregation in the Little Werder. As Mennonites settled in other villages, new congregations might arise. These then became affiliated with older, more established churches, either Flemish or Frisian.

Mennonite church members were forbidden to bring legal suit against each other; differences were to be negotiated by leaders of the congregation. Usually these were the "teachers." This body also was charged with discipline in the church, and its members were often referred to as *Vermahner* (exhorters).[29] Persons who avoided mandated taxes, failed to pay their debts, or disregarded church regulations could expect reprimands from these leaders. If such admonition proved ineffective, expulsion from the church body was the most severe consequence.

Ministers conducted weddings in the churches, which, along with births and deaths, had to be recorded in the local parish church, either Catholic or Lutheran. Usually the clergy in the local Lutheran or Catholic churches were very diligent in entering these events, since Mennonites paid dues for this service.

Various civic responsibilities were also carried out, with the church leadership acting as representatives of the congregation. Thus, in 1613 Danzig adopted an ordinance which declared that "since Mennonites do not serve as [armed] city guards and also do not serve as soldiers," they should pay for those who would carry out these tasks in place of Mennonites.[30] Mennonite ministers were charged with collecting the stipulated assessments.

Differing views on church leadership sometimes led to conflict and change. The small church in Neunhuben in the Danzig Werder was a branch of the Danzig Flemish church. However, in 1826, when Danzig decided to appoint a salaried pastor, the smaller congregation chose to affiliate with the Fürstenwerder congregation, which had retained its lay ministry. Then, in the middle of the nineteenth century, some members of the city congregation in Elbing felt that traditional leadership practices had become less than satisfactory. They wanted to have theologically trained pastors rather than lay ministers. Furthermore, church government and polity and the desire to have greater lay participation in determining church actions were also issues. This led to the formation of a second Mennonite congregation in the city, and this group chose to affiliate with the Königsberg congregation where Carl Harder, a university-trained minister, served as pastor. The new Elbing congregation thus parted with some traditional practices but remained a Mennonite church. Organized in 1850, this new congregation pushed for a less rigid, more accommodating attitude in cultural and social issues such as mixed marriages. It also

Restored Heubuden Cemetery. Many formerly neglected and devastated cemeteries have been restored by efforts of interested persons from Poland, the Netherlands, Germany, Canada, and United States.

permitted its members to serve in the local militia. Harder expressed some of these views in a small periodical called *Monatsschrift der evangelischen Mennoniten*, which he had launched in 1846 to "call forth a spirit of love in people, and to create a bond of unity among our fellowmen."[31]

While Mennonites were organized into Flemish and Frisian groups, they usually acted in unison when confronted by challenges from political, ecclesiastical, or economic quarters. As an immigrant community, they confronted the processes of acculturation with efforts to preserve their own distinctives. As a minority religious group, they developed policies for coexistence with a variety of other religious and ethnic groups as they sought to come to terms with new or varying political structures and institutions. Mennonite communities looked for strong leaders who could speak for them and be effective voices to the surrounding world.

Church Discipline and Cultural Values

From its earliest days, the Mennonite movement embraced a strong view of Scripture. Many taught that "following Christ" was the mark of a true believer, and they expected fellow believers to observe a number of ethical standards drawn from their understanding of the Scriptures. Early statements about faith and its expression, as indicated in the Swiss Schleitheim Confession (1527), or the Dutch Dortrecht Confession (1632), affirmed a determination to hold members of the movement accountable in matters of faith and life. Menno Simons had written extensively on this subject.

Mennonites who came to Royal Prussia brought with them the beliefs and practices of similar faith communities in the Netherlands and northern Germany. Early statements of faith adopted by Mennonites in the Vistula Delta and other areas in the region show that church discipline was taken seriously, although not all congregations were equally rigorous. Although early Mennonite immigrants brought religious literature from the Netherlands, they often had their own catechisms and confessions printed. Thus, the confession of 1660 specifically states that it is printed for Mennonites in Prussia. Similarly, the statements issued by the minister Georg Hansen and the Elder Hendrik van Duhren in 1678, as well as another confession printed in 1696, clearly reflect a strong conviction that Mennonite leaders here were determined to uphold their traditional views. Although by the latter part of the seventeenth century many Mennonite communities in the Netherlands had become more relaxed in some aspects of church discipline than their sister congregations in Royal Prussia, pastoral and preaching visitations between the two areas continued. Neither group hesitated to exhort the other to adhere more closely to accepted teachings.

Persons officially became members of the congregation when they were baptized. Baptism upon profession of faith was preceded by catechetical instruction. Candidates were recommended by several members of the congregation, and these "sponsors" were expected to help the new church member observe church regulations and practices. In the event that difficulties should arise, the member could expect assistance from the congregation. Those who deviated from expected behavior and belief patterns might well be called to account by church leaders. Failure to accept admonition and direction could bring church discipline, including possible expulsion from the congregation.

One of the issues that created tension was the rigor with which the church "ban" (removal from church fellowship) should be applied. This question had already plagued the church in the time of Menno Simons, and not all church leaders agreed on the practices that might merit severance from church membership. One of the champions of unity among Mennonites in Royal Prussia and in the Netherlands was Elder Quirin Vermeulen from the Flemish congregation in Danzig. He became so concerned about this question that he attended a meeting of Dutch church elders in Haarlem and Emden in the early 1580s and urged Flemish and Frisian Mennonite leaders to settle their differences. He contended that their disagreements had nothing to do with basic Christian faith and should not be causes of division. He sadly noted that his pursuit of "peace" had not been successful.[32]

In Danzig and the Vistula Delta as well as further upstream, some elders and other church members decided that Vermeulen had been too lax, and in 1586 they voted to relieve him of his office.[33] Yet in 1588 the church in Elbing entered a protest against this action. Despite these controversies, Vermeulen remained active in the Danzig church and found ways to assist the different congregations in Danzig and the delta even when city regulations prohibited city presses from publishing Mennonite and Socinian materials.[34] Records of Vermeulen's role in the Royal Prussian churches show that by this time there were organized Mennonite congregations not only in Danzig but also in Elbing, Montau, Thorn, and the Werder, even though in most instances, these congregations had not yet received permission to construct churches.

Questions of church discipline continued to plague some of the churches in the Danzig region and sometimes reflected a divergence between Mennonites in the Netherlands and those in Danzig. The attitude taken toward portrait painting is one instance of this differing point of view. By the end of the seventeenth century, a number of Dutch Mennonite painters had established themselves as artists of note both in the Netherlands and beyond. Nonetheless, they continued as members of Mennonite congregations. In Danzig, however, the case of Enoch Seeman dramatically illustrated a very different stance.

Seeman was a painter and member of the Danzig Flemish Mennonite Church. As a "free master" (not a member of the guild), he was appointed "City Painter" and held that position from 1683 to 1698.[35] Trouble de-

veloped when Georg Hansen, minister and now elder of the congregation, opposed the painting of portraits. Apparently Hansen was convinced that the prohibition against making "graven images" in the Ten Commandments also applied to painting portraits. He was prepared to permit the painting of landscapes and other scenes, but not portraits. Eventually, the clash between artist and elder led to Seeman's expulsion from the church. Seeman explained his position in a publication, "Revelation and Punishment of Georg Hansen's Foolishness."[36] Subsequently, he moved to Warsaw, where he served as painter at the royal court. In 1704 he transferred to London, where his son Enoch continued the father's tradition, becoming a portrait painter as well. The son's portraits and sketches included a number of prominent leaders, including Elihu Yale, founder of the university.

Not surprisingly, Dutch Mennonites expressed their disagreement with Hansen on this issue. For them, arts such as painting, music, and literature were important elements in community life. This attitude was powerfully expressed in paintings such as Rembrandt's *The Mennonite Preacher Anslo and His Wife*, created in 1641. Rembrandt's contemporary, Joost van den Vondel, recognized the power of the painting, yet at the same time noted that Anslo's preaching was what really distinguished him: "Who desires to see Anslo must hear him."[37]

For the Flemish Mennonite Church in Danzig, the situation changed over time. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the pastor of the church, Hans van Steen, had his own portrait drawn.

A similar cultural issue arose when a Mennonite from the Netherlands who wore a wig came to Danzig and asked to be accepted into membership of the Frisian Mennonite Church. The custom was already widespread among Dutch Mennonites, but Elder Hendrik van Duhren objected. For him, wearing a wig was ostentatious and symbolized an excessive accommodation to fashion in a worldly society. Nevertheless, numerous members of the congregation saw no problem with such cultural expressions, and the congregation became divided on the issue. Elders from the delta, as well as from the Netherlands, tried to find a solution. An exasperated minister from the Netherlands wrote that fashions come and go; what was important was a humble attitude before God and a dependence upon divine grace.[38] Eventually this view prevailed, and the dispute was resolved.

The Mennonite Preacher Anslo, by Rembrandt (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Gemäldegalerie). Joost van den Vondel, friend to both Rembrandt and Anslo, commented that no painting could do justice to Anslo's preaching.

Mutual Aid

As Mennonites settled in the delta and up the Vistula, they also established mutual aid associations. When calamities of fire or flood struck, there was always a faith community of support. That was part of their tradition, whether the group was Flemish or Frisian. Mutual support was a natural extension of their view of the church. Little aid was to be expected from political authorities, although if disaster such as flood or fire came, local lords might well grant exemption from traditional lease payments.

Mennonite congregations also placed strong emphasis on caring for the needy, so they built hospices to care for the poor. Church members were expected to contribute to this form of social assistance, and churches regu-

larly appointed deacons and deaconesses who were charged with the responsibility of carrying out this ministry. In Danzig, the Flemish church usually had about thirty persons living in its home; the smaller Frisian congregation, about a dozen.

For most members of the Mennonite community, the church served as the religious, social, and cultural center. Persons chosen as ministers tended to be highly respected leaders and thus could speak with a measure of authority.

Since the church was such a vital part of Mennonite life, exclusion from it—or, more likely, simply the threat of exclusion—was a powerful disciplining factor. At the same time, given the emphasis on practical Christianity, members could also be assured that in times of distress the church would respond to a need. Hospices and various forms of assistance gave members a measure of security that, in early modern times, could not be taken for granted in most societies.

CHAPTER 7

A House Divided

Throughout the almost two and a half centuries that Mennonites in Royal Prussia remained under the Polish crown, questions of toleration usually centered on the relative importance of religious versus economic issues. On the one hand, Mennonites were often recognized as model water engineers and farmers and won praise from many landowners, whether they were bishops, nobles, or members of a city government. On the other hand, some church leaders, such as Bishop Hosius of Warmia, simply wanted no Protestants of any kind in their territories.

There were sporadic efforts to expel Mennonites from some regions, but political or religious leaders almost always found a solution. In a few instances in Ducal Prussia, Mennonites were actually expelled, but they were never expelled from Royal Prussia. Usually defense and vigorous support came from a variety of city authorities, bishops, royal administrators, landlords, courts, and the crown. Although various authorities might issue demands for Mennonite expulsion, in most cases counter-demands would nullify such attempts. At times decrees issued by the same monarch might be contradictory. A king who had earlier denounced Mennonites as undesirable, even dangerous members of society might later praise them and assure them of royal favor.[1]

Religious Roulette: Catholic versus Lutheran

Following the Reformation, the question of the locus of church authority became a contentious issue. With the growth of Lutheranism in the region, and somewhat later also Calvinism, ecclesiastical power was not readily defined. Parish churches, once Catholic, now might be Protestant, although the parishioners could be either Lutheran or Catholic. Payment of traditional church dues became a matter of dispute between Lutherans and Catholics; the addition of Mennonites to the parish added another complication. Disputes over church jurisdiction, whether pertaining to church dues, parish boundaries, or the extent of ecclesiastical authority, thus formed a significant part of the religious landscape in the sixteenth century and later. The dramatic changes that occurred in this arena were illustrated by the fact that by the middle of the sixteenth century at least half of the national *Sejm* was non-Catholic. However, by the end of the century this trend had been reversed, and Catholics again were overwhelmingly dominant.

This was also the time of a vigorous Counter-Reformation. The introduction of the Jesuits brought a highly disciplined and dedicated force into the service of the Catholic Church in Royal Prussia. They were given a large measure of control over education, and their graduates were given preference in crown appointments. Indeed, royal patronage was restricted to Catholics. No doubt this was a powerful factor in the dramatic decline of the number of Protestants within the nobility. Sometimes, however, champions of the Counter-Reformation failed in their efforts. Thus, when in 1585 the bishop of Warmia brought the first Jesuit to Danzig in hopes of establishing a Jesuit college in the city, the council moved resolutely against this.[2] Eventually, the bishop was forced to move this venture to church property in Altschottland.

Less spectacular but nonetheless significant religious changes shaped life in the delta and beyond, where no central religious or political authority determined all religious issues. When Mennonites settled in the delta and became part of this scenario, they faced a number of uncertainties. Churches could not be built unless permission was granted by the respective authorities. Church dues were complicated by a disparity of recognized practices. Mennonites in the Danzig Werder might be required to pay all regular assessments, but in the nearby *tenuta* (administrative area)

of Bärwalde, the *accidentia* (incidental fees) for marriages and funerals might be waived.[3] Not surprisingly, such dues were frequently protested or negotiated.

In addition to these contradictory factors, Mennonites encountered a Catholic hierarchy that was far from uniform in its policies for dealing with these immigrants. In part, this diversity may have resulted from bishops' often functioning as both religious and secular rulers. The position of "prince bishop" was especially common in Germany but was also found in other countries such as Poland. Some historians have suggested that political and economic realities may well have muted the religious policies of these bishops. When the bishop of Kulm permitted Mennonites to build a church in Montau in 1586,[4] he may have had both economic and religious motives. In this instance, the new church was badly damaged by floods and the ravages of war in the succeeding years; new spans to strengthen the structure had to be put in place in 1677. Then, in 1859, the church was largely rebuilt. Eventually, a new brick church was built in 1898,[5] all with no major episcopal objections.

During the years of Mennonite life under the Polish crown, some Catholic or Protestant champions of religious toleration or of expulsion of Mennonites could always be found. For both communions, the question of dominance became more important than the presence of Mennonites. Thus, when Lutherans gained control in Danzig, they tried to check the role of Catholics and to limit the growth and influence of the Reformed (Calvinists) in the city. Similarly, Catholic leaders attempted to halt the growth of Protestant movements throughout the state. Mennonites often benefited from power struggles between Catholics and Protestants and also among the different branches of Protestantism.

Tensions sometimes expressed themselves in actions that were more annoying than harmful. Acts designed deliberately to offend the other religious body were common between Catholics and Protestants.[6] However, positions taken by one leader of a religious body were by no means necessarily typical of that religious community.

A classic illustration of such contradiction was apparent in positions taken by two Catholic bishops. Bishop Hosius, later cardinal, of Warmia and his successors were ardent champions of the Counter-Reformation; thus, they decreed that no Mennonites were to be admitted into their bishopric. Beyond that, Hosius urged that royal privileges permitting a

large measure of freedom of religion be granted only to Catholics and Lutherans. In contrast, his fellow-bishop, the bishop of Włocławek, who owned land adjoining the walls of the city of Danzig, allowed Mennonite craftsmen to settle on his lands and thus augment his episcopal income.[7] On the Protestant side, in 1535 Duke Albert of East Prussia followed the advice of his Lutheran bishop, Paul Speratus, and ordered all Anabaptists to leave his duchy "under penalty of loss of life and property."[8] Upon further reflection and requests from some of his officials, Albert allowed Mennonites to return.

Pronouncements at a regional diet or *sejmik* (local parliament) were often little more than perfunctory efforts at maintaining a proper image. At a session in Marienburg in 1554, both Mennonites and Scots were denounced, the former because of "heresy,"[9] the latter because Scottish traders were moving freely and selling their wares in competition with local merchants.[10] No effective action was taken against the Scots since they had significant support in city councils as well as abroad, nor were there any significant moves against Mennonites. Then, just a few years later, the city of Elbing leased much of the Ellerwald, west and north of the city, to Mennonites. For shrewd owners of this land, income was more important than danger from heresy.

Sweeping generalities were sometimes used to warn of the danger created when communities left the traditional faith. Thus, at the provincial *sejmik* in Graudenz (Grudziądz) in 1581, the bishop of Kulm (Chełmno) mournfully intoned, "Since many have forsaken God, religious divisions have spread like a cancer in our society, attacking our earlier time when all held to a pure faith and all things were done in love and unity."[11] Unfortunately, no precise description of this "earlier Eden" was given. At another session in Graudenz a century later, in 1699, some members urged that "Mennonites, Quakers and Pietists"[12] be subject to the harsh laws already adopted against Arians.[13] Clearly, Lutheran Pietism had spread to Royal Prussia.

On other occasions, positions taken by government or church officials suggested a lack of awareness of religious reality. Or perhaps the officials simply needed to make an expected statement of orthodoxy. Thus, at the provincial *sejmik* in 1612, a number of local government representatives urged that steps be taken to prevent further immigration by "Zwinglians, Calvinists, Anabaptists [Mennonites] and other sectarians."[14] A direc-

tive from the crown in the same year echoed a much milder sentiment when King John II Casimir stipulated that members of the Reformed faith should not be placed in positions of authority.[15] Clearly, such pronouncements had little impact, for Calvinists were already firmly established as merchants and traders, having been admitted as citizens of cities. Some had even become members of city councils, as in Danzig and Elbing.

However, the changing political and economic realities apparently were noticed at the royal court, for in 1651 the king issued a mandate instructing the Danzig city council not only to permit Calvinists to settle there but also to allow Calvinists to practice their religion freely in Danzig.[16] In reality, religious boundaries and jurisdictions had become rather fluid. Previously, in 1617, the Lutheran-dominated city council in Elbing returned the St. Nicholas Church to the Catholics even though the earlier Reformation fervor had brought it under Lutheran control.[17]

This was a time when many countries, of varying religious persuasions, complained about the spread of "heresy." Sometimes when Danzig ships transported goods to England, they returned with reports that the king of England had accused them of spreading the Lutheran heresy in his country.[18] Even when Lutheranism became dominant in Danzig, sharp divisions within that faith communion were evident in the ranks of the Lutheran clergy. Efforts to sound the alarm about the growth of "heresy" were standard fare at sessions of the *sejmik*.

Cosmopolitan, economically vibrant cities such as Danzig did not have a uniform, constant religious policy. When members of the third estate, represented by the guilds, complained of competition from Mennonite merchants and craftsmen living on the city's outskirts, the city sometimes considered restrictive action. Nonetheless, beginning in the 1540s, Danzig allowed Mennonites to live on its land.[19] Full coffers were more persuasive than guild complaints.

Mennonites in Catholic and Lutheran Parishes: Payment of Dues

The issue of Mennonites paying church dues to the parishes in which they lived long remained a matter of dispute. Tradition was clear and simple: persons who lived in parishes paid dues to the local church, whether Catholic or Lutheran, whether in Royal Prussia or in other areas of Eu-

rope. The *decem*, or tithe, was only one of numerous payments made to the church. In addition, parishioners were expected to give Catholic priests or Lutheran pastors appropriate payments for baptisms and registrations of births, marriages, burials, and other church ceremonies. For the Mennonites, complications arose as they settled on land that was geographically situated in a Catholic or, later, Lutheran parish. The local priest or minister certainly wanted to retain income from the land even if those living on the land were not Catholic or Lutheran. In 1686 one local Lutheran minister described the anomaly: "In the Large Werder the Roman Catholics hold all the parish churches, even though they have almost no adherents."[20] In accordance with long-established practices, church dues were tied to the land, so that Lutherans and Mennonites found themselves compelled to make regular contributions (e.g., d*ecem*, *kalende*, or *quartalsgeld*) to the Catholic priest. Although Protestants objected to this compulsory support of Catholic churches, the practice was rooted in centuries of tradition. Besides, as some observers noted, no Protestant was forced to settle on land in a Catholic parish.

In an attempt to resolve the dispute, Joannes X. Malachowski, bishop of Kulm and Pomesania, issued a formal statement addressing this issue in 1677. He outlined the parish dues tied to crown and church lands in the Werder, irrespective of the faith of the leaseholder thus: Lutherans and Mennonites were to be free to establish their own congregations, but they would continue traditional payments to the Catholic Church.[21] Thus, Mennonite births, marriages, and deaths were often recorded in both the Mennonite and the Catholic or Lutheran church registers.

Support for different religious groups sometimes came in unexpected ways. When the armies of the Swedish king, Gustavus Adolphus, gained control over much of the Vistula Delta in 1627, the Lutheran parish of Thiensdorf in the Little Werder appealed to the illustrious guest to compel landholders in villages such as Alt- and Preussisch Rosengart, Markushof, and Thiergart to pay their church dues to the Lutheran minister. These villages had heavy Mennonite populations and had objected to paying dues to a church other than their own. From his military encampment, the ever-devout Lutheran king ordered the offending parishioners to "pay the traditional dues and not reduce or change them in the slightest." Failure to do so would bring the king's "displeasure and appropriate punishment."[22] All the mentioned villages were in an area of the delta where Lutherans

had established parishes but where Mennonites were often more numerous in a specific village. The remarkable extent of Swedish involvement was reflected when Axel Oxenstierna, the Swedish chancellor and close confidant of the king, ordered the building of a Lutheran church in the area.[23]

In the Large Werder, as noted by the historian Christoph Hartknoch, the Catholic Church remained strong for a time. Not surprisingly, Lutheran ministers hoped to gain equal status with Catholic priests by requesting that Catholics pay dues to Lutheran churches if they lived in Lutheran parishes, since Lutherans had to pay dues to Catholics when living in Catholic parishes. In 1700, the Lutherans lost an appeal to Theodore Potocki, then bishop of Kulm and Pomesania, who denounced their request as "contrary to reason."[24] Almost a century later, Cardinal Michael Radziejowski, archbishop of Gniezno, again issued a ruling firmly rejecting the Lutheran request. Nonetheless, he stated that Lutherans were free to impose their own dues and to build their own churches.[25] The right to build churches had been a separate matter, varying from region to region. It was often an issue under the local bishop's control and purview.

For Mennonites, the question of paying church dues became increasingly controversial as both they and the Lutherans expanded their holdings in the delta. In some instances where Mennonites acquired land from Lutherans, the local Lutheran pastor insisted that parish dues needed to be maintained regardless of who owned the land. In at least one instance, Mennonite landholders agreed to make some voluntary payments "out of love" for the non-Mennonites, but they resisted efforts requiring them to make regular payments to Lutheran pastors.[26] As Lutheran church leaders tried to stabilize support of their churches, the administrator of the Tiegenhof area asserted that church dues were bound to the land. Mennonites "who buy farmsteads from Lutherans . . . acquire the customary village obligations toward the Lutheran churches."[27] Repeatedly, religious and civil administrators insisted that church assessments were tied to land, not to persons. For their part, Mennonite communities often paid the assessments for widows and others who were in financial need.[28]

Sometimes diplomatic maneuvering carried the day. In the latter part of the seventeenth century and again in the late eighteenth century, some Mennonites appealed to the Catholic hierarchy of Poland to free them from

obligatory dues to the Lutheran Church. In one instance, a victory was apparently gained when Cardinal Michael Radziejowski issued a statement releasing Mennonites from obligations to pay dues to Lutheran pastors,[29] but this respite was short-lived. Lutheran leaders pointed out that church dues were tied to land, and Mennonites had voluntarily bought land and had thereby incurred the obligations associated with such a purchase. Upon further study, the cardinal rescinded his earlier action, noting that he had not been fully informed. Thus, a Catholic cardinal insisted that traditional church policies would be maintained, even though he was in essence supporting the Lutheran treasury. Mennonites were advised that if they found this unacceptable, they would have to move off the land.

Similarly, settlers on lands belonging to the cities of Danzig and Elbing were required to continue paying church dues. Payments were made to the local parish, whether Lutheran or Catholic. The fact that many of the new settlers in the Ellerwald or parts of the Danzig Werder were Mennonite was irrelevant. Exemption from traditional church dues was not granted. Later this position was amplified by royal decree. A record from 1869—in this case a list of payments in grain and money to a Catholic parish made by Mennonites in villages such as Heubuden, Tralau (Tralewo), Eichwalde (Dębina), and Koszelicke—indicates that the practice enunciated in 1677 was still in effect.[30] Not surprisingly, the issue strained community relationships.[31]

One benefit of the practice of maintaining traditional obligations was that this encouraged Lutheran and Catholic clergy to keep careful records of Mennonite births, deaths, and burials, since these events brought fees to the state church coffers. In many instances, Catholics and Lutherans attempted to restrict Mennonite burials to cemeteries where the state churches could collect fees. In the largely Mennonite villages in the Ellerwald, Lutherans long restricted Mennonite burials to the Lutheran cemetery at St. Anne's in Elbing. Only later were Mennonites permitted to establish their own cemeteries nearer to their own churches.[32]

Responses to Religious Challenges

Since Mennonites constituted a religious movement outside the boundaries of European religious communities protected by treaties such as the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 or by city councils who usually limited tolera-

tion to state churches, it is not surprising that their opponents frequently brought charges against them. These allegations might address religious matters such as teaching unapproved doctrines, but sometimes the reasons were economic, as when Danzig guilds charged Mennonite craftsmen with practicing trades that competed with the guilds. In 1562, when a guild brought such allegations and the council suggested that Mennonites be permitted to become citizens and join the guilds, the guild's response to that possibility was decidedly negative.[33]

With regard to beliefs, religious leaders periodically conducted examinations of Mennonite teachings to see if any doctrines were being taught for which juridical punishments were prescribed. Although the Confederation of Warsaw declared that Poland was a land of religious toleration and that no prince or other leader would use military power to impose a specific religion, the extent of toleration was still largely dependent on local authorities. Thus, when one group issued charges against another religious body, an investigation might be undertaken. Frequently, city councils acted to defuse issues they did not wish to come to a crisis. In one case, Catholic officials, speaking in the interests of priests in the Werder, complained that Mennonites were depriving priests of their due income. The council demurred since it did not wish to lose income from its lands now being cultivated by Mennonites. Eventually, a perfunctory order demanding conformity and threatening expulsion was issued, but it was not enforced.[34] On other occasions, when a city council took limited action against farmers in the Danzig Werder, ecclesiastical officials allowed the Mennonites to settle on their church lands. Various civic and church officials complained often about "heretical" teachings of Mennonites, but this is hardly surprising, since religious uniformity was a goal of Catholic bishops even if Mennonites were admitted as settlers.

Because they were frequently questioned about their religious beliefs and needed to show that they embraced basic Christian doctrines, Mennonites issued a number of confessional statements. Sometimes these were responses to specific questions; at other times, Mennonites issued detailed creedal summaries. One, a 49-page "Confession or Brief, Simple Statement of Faith of Those Who are Called Mennonites in Prussia"[35] issued in 1660, clearly showed that Mennonites were orthodox in their views of central tenets of the Christian faith, Catholic authorities agreed. Mennonites did, however, reject participation in war and violence, and they

regarded baptism as an outward expression of an inner faith for those who voluntarily chose to follow the teachings of Christ.

Religious and political authorities conducted several elaborate investigations in the seventeenth century. Part of the impetus for such examinations came from a renewed Catholic determination to ensure that the traditional faith would regain its earlier influence and scope. This "Counter-Reformation" was designed to weaken Protestant positions throughout Europe and became an important factor in restoring Catholic control in many areas. In Poland, a number of prominent leaders who had become Protestant returned to the Catholic fold as the Counter-Reformation flexed its muscle. It was in that context that several Mennonite leaders were asked to appear before tribunals and explain what they believed and practiced.

In 1678 two such hearings took place at a residence on Danzig's Long Market. King John III Sobieski ordered the investigation, and it was conducted under the direction of Stanisław Sarnowski, bishop of Włocławek. Leaders of both Mennonite churches in Danzig were requested to answer questions about their beliefs. The minister (and later elder) Georg Hansen was selected to answer for the Danzig Flemish Mennonites, while Elder Hendrik van Duhren[36] spoke for the Frisians. Both were acknowledged leaders in their respective churches.

Hendrik van Duhren, the first to be questioned, made his response on 17 January 1678. Since both leaders had been given a series of questions earlier, Van Duhren had taken the added precaution of asking his fellow believers in the Netherlands to help draft the replies.[37] His responses tended to be brief and are recorded with short notations.[38] The questioning began with basic theological tenets. Since the question of Arianism had arisen, the first question dealt with the Trinity. Other issues included the role of Scripture, the means of grace, the nature of the church, and specific practices and beliefs of Mennonites such as their view of baptism, communion, and the appropriate role of the state. The responses evidently satisfied the interrogators. When he was asked whether Catholics could be true believers, van Duhren responded affirmatively and noted that many Catholics were "holy people" who shared in God's salvation. In answer to another question about whether he believed that the pope was the Antichrist, he responded with "the strongest negative."[39]

Hansen, together with delegates from his church, appeared before

Bishop Sarnowski on 20 January 1678 and presented a copy of a confession of faith and responses to the forty-eight questions previously given to the Flemish church by the bishop's staff. The printed Latin and German versions state that an additional copy was given "to His Royal Majesty in Poland John III in Dantzig."[40] The document was evidently the first Mennonite confession printed in Royal Prussia. Leaders of the congregation had carefully reviewed Hansen's answers.[41] An analysis of these answers suggests that the Flemish Mennonites wanted to show that their faith was based on Scripture, so they included many biblical quotations, including references to the Apocrypha. The printed confession of faith, the answers to the bishop's forty-eight questions, and a stenographic account of the meeting all show that views on the Trinity were carefully scrutinized. The confession also included statements on baptism, communion, foot washing, the state, refusal to bear arms in war, rejection of oaths, the last judgment, and other topics. Using typical Mennonite language, Hansen cited the widely held view that the old adage, "An eye for an eye," had been superseded by Christ's command to "love one's enemies."[42] Mennonites wanted to be good citizens, he said, but they held that the teachings of Christ prohibited believers' participation in war.[43]

Hansen diplomatically stood his ground in spite of direct and forceful questions. The interrogators were aware that some Protestants, including Luther, had described the pope as the Antichrist, so they asked Hansen if that was also his view. He replied in the negative and added, cryptically, that he was prepared to recognize all the honor God had given the pope. Apparently, this satisfied the questioners. When the matter of baptism was discussed, Hansen outlined the Mennonite belief that only persons who had come to faith in Christ should be baptized and that therefore infants were not baptized. In response to further questions, Hansen observed that adults coming from churches that observed infant baptism sometimes went to the Netherlands to be baptized on profession of their faith. When pressed further, Hansen responded that the Mennonites recognized only believer's baptism but tried to avoid conflict with the state on this issue. Also, he insisted that Mennonites did not "despise" infant baptism even though they practiced baptism upon profession of faith.[44] Hansen emphasized that he certainly did not mean to denigrate Catholic baptism.

The bishop and his entourage were apparently satisfied with the re-

The 1678 Confessions of Faith (Library, Polish Academy of Sciences, Gdańsk). The concluding section of one of these documents states that "these are the articles of our confession and doctrine, taught by us, who are called Mennonites."

sponses. Hansen stated that the churches had been freed from "suspicion," but he noted that the favorable finding had cost his church "a heavy contribution of money." This was not unusual; on another occasion, he reported that some "Jesuit fathers" had approached him with a request that he contribute to the construction of a tower for a Catholic church. Hansen's congregation gathered the funds and forwarded them. Such ecumenical gestures were not restricted to Catholics. In 1688 Mennonites in Danzig were asked to contribute 300 florins toward the building of a Lutheran church. Once again, Hansen asked his congregation for contributions; the funds were delivered and, as Hansen laconically noted, received "with great thankfulness."[45]

The systematic interrogation of van Duhren and Hansen served to strengthen religious cooperation between churches in the Netherlands

and in Royal Prussia. A number of churches in the Netherlands had written responses to the issues raised in the Danzig examinations of Mennonite beliefs. A Dutch report indicated that there had been considerable variation in some responses given by the two Mennonite leaders.[46] At the same time, in the opinion of the Catholic interrogators, both representatives had given evidence of holding basic Christian beliefs. The occasion provided an opportunity for a sharing of views among Mennonites from the Vistula Delta, the Netherlands, and Hamburg.[47]

Opponents and Supporters of Mennonites

The interrogations did not signal an end to charges against Mennonites, however. Bishop Hosius had earlier brought Jesuits to his diocese, and he moved resolutely to use education to stop Protestant movements. Numerous schools were established, and royal patronage was increasingly used to employ graduates of Jesuit schools. Successive bishops of Warmia carried on this practice and seemed able always to find cause for another denunciation of "heresy."

Several times, Bishop Hosius, as well as other religious and political leaders, accused Mennonites of being "Arians." Mennonites regularly denied this, but at the same time, a number of Unitarian leaders had approached Mennonites and sought to develop a fraternal relationship. After numerous such overtures from Unitarians, Mennonite leaders in the delta in 1613 wrote to "ministers and elders" in the Netherlands, requesting help in responding to the Unitarians. At the heart of the Unitarian request was the shared emphasis on peace and nonviolence, which, it was hoped, could form a basis for collaboration.[48] Unitarians also made similar suggestions to Mennonites in the Netherlands,[49] and this quest for closer ties continued so that for a time a number of Dutch Mennonites did adopt Unitarian teachings.[50] However, for most Mennonites, especially in Royal Prussia, rejection of trinitarian beliefs was simply not an option, as numerous doctrinal statements, including those of van Duhren and Hansen now showed.

Sometimes opponents of Mennonites used literary devices to attack religious nonconformists. A satire published in 1691 was typical of the kind of scurrilous writing that was designed to discredit Mennonites. A Jesuit, Joannes Schröter, presented the "genealogy" of Menno Simons. Ex-

plaining that the "heretical poison of the Mennonites is spreading like a pestilence," he offered his analysis: "The book of the birth of Menno Simons, the son of Belial, the son of the devil . . . the son of Hus, who was the father of Luther, who was the father of Karlstadt, who was the father of . . . Zwingli, who was the father of Calvin, who was the father of the Anabaptists, . . . of whom was born Simon Menno, called Frisian."[51]

Despite the earlier satisfactory reports based on the Hansen and van Duhren interrogations, in 1696 the Warmian bishop argued that Poland's official policy of toleration should not extend to Mennonites, since they were simply another variety of Arians. He at least would permit no Mennonite to settle on his lands.

Once again, landowners, including powerful nobles who found that Mennonites were good farmers, openly opposed the bishop. Furthermore, various royal statements of privilege granted freedom of worship to Mennonites. It was clear that Mennonites were supported because they were valued for their positive impact on the economy of the region. Moreover, Mennonites themselves realized that the toleration in Poland was far superior to the treatment accorded their people in many other parts of Europe, including Ducal Prussia.

Inter-confessional Relations

One issue that was treated gingerly was the acceptance of converts from other faiths into Mennonite churches. Officials of both the Catholic and Protestant churches repeatedly issued warnings forbidding their members to join Mennonite congregations and requested that city councils take steps to prevent this. Evidently, this issue remained a concern, for instances of intermarriage appear repeatedly in civil and church records. For example, in 1692 two Lutheran ministers in Ohra, a suburb of Danzig, complained to the city council that a Lutheran had married a Mennonite woman, and they urged the council to be more vigilant in taking action to prevent such marriages.[52] Policies of the city regarding this issue varied and often were unevenly enforced.

Even the marriage vows themselves could be problematic. Since Mennonites declined to take an oath, when civil situations arose where an oath was customary, Mennonites might be permitted to make a simple affirmation. One city council declined to make a serious issue of taking oaths and

simply declared that "when a Lutheran marries a Mennonite, the oath may be waived, and a simple 'yes' may be substituted."[53]

Civil and religious leaders warned Mennonite ministers not to accept or seek converts from other faiths. Confrontations might arise when a person from another faith desired to join a Mennonite church. In 1686 a woman asked to be baptized and accepted into a Danzig Mennonite church. The city council was informed of this, and the Mennonite minister was summoned. He was accused of having misled the woman, fined 50 ducats, and instructed to refer her to the Lutheran minister.[54]

Nonetheless, others did join Mennonite congregations. Sometimes such converts would go to the Netherlands to be baptized and then return to a Mennonite church in Royal Prussia. A contemporary Dutch chronicle recorded numerous instances.[55] On one such occasion in 1731, church leaders from the Large Werder wrote to the Mennonite church *bij het Lam* in Amsterdam and informed them that two men baptized as infants now wanted to be baptized upon profession of their faith and join the Mennonites. The Werder leaders explained that they were forbidden to baptize these men and therefore hoped that the ministers in Amsterdam would do this expeditiously, since the young men needed to return to their homes.[56]

In 1741, when a Lutheran woman living on Danzig-owned land married a Mennonite, the couple followed a similar procedure. They went to the Netherlands, where the woman was baptized and joined her husband's church.[57] Upon their return, they were not permitted to reside in Danzig or on Danzig-owned land.[58] Anticipating such developments, the Danzig city council in 1711 and 1712 had issued ordinances stipulating that children born to mixed marriages were to be reared in the faith of the non-Mennonite partner.[59] This directive was reissued numerous times, suggesting that its observance was not strictly enforced. However, extremely harsh punishment was sometimes ordered for converts to the Mennonite faith. For example, Johan Nabel, a Catholic convert to the Mennonite faith who had gone to the Netherlands to be baptized, was imprisoned upon his return. A Mennonite church in Amsterdam expressed its dismay at "how limited"[60] freedom in Danzig was.

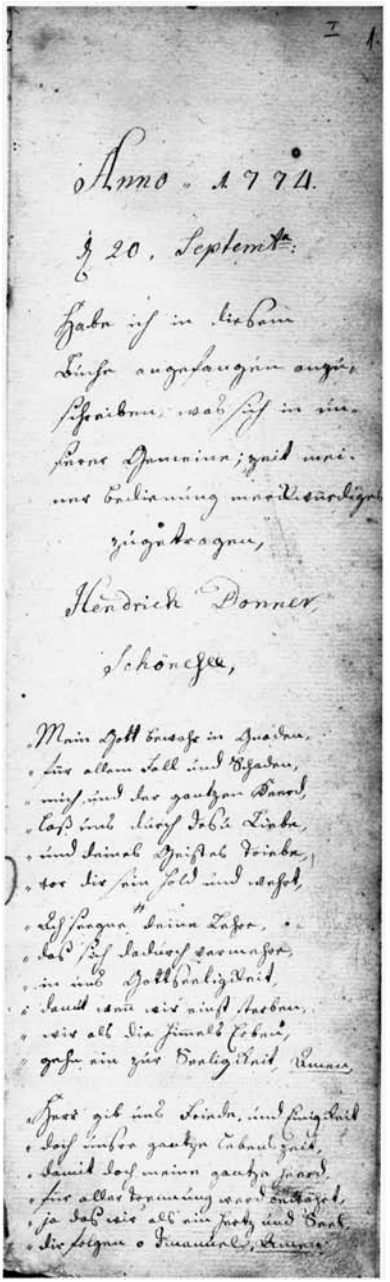
On other occasions, persons were attracted by the life and beliefs of the Mennonites and asked to be admitted into their churches even though they knew this might create problems. In 1719, when the Mennonite el-

der from the Netherlands, Berents Hulshoff, sailed to Danzig to conduct a preaching tour in a number of churches in Royal Prussia, he encountered such a situation. In his diary he recorded that during this voyage he met a remarkable man, Freerik Luetzner, from the Danzig Mennonite Church in Schottland. Luetzner, a former soldier, told the elder that he had been so impressed with the life and teachings of the Mennonites that, despite the jeers of his fellow soldiers, he had become a member of the Mennonite Church in Danzig.[61]

Sometimes the number of persons wishing to join the Mennonites was surprisingly large. A Lutheran church survey in Königsberg in 1722 examined twenty-six persons who were accused of having joined a Mennonite church.[62] These converts gave a variety of reasons for their decisions. In one instance, a weaver stated that the "piety" that he and his wife had observed in the Mennonite Church had motivated them to join this group.[63] Another young man said he wanted to become a Mennonite because he had noticed that this church community took care of people in need. A woman explained that Mennonites had helped her to learn to read. Frequently, converts referred to the kindness and help they had experienced.[64]

The responses of officials were sometimes modified by personal relationships. Heinrich Donner was a noted elder who gave leadership to the Frisian congregations in the delta and whose standing in the community benefited those churches. His chronicle records events covering the last quarter of the eighteenth century. It is worth noting that when Mennonite delegations were sent to negotiate with government authorities, Donner was often a major spokesperson. Nonetheless, at the risk of his stature in the larger political arena, he was ready to welcome persons from other confessions who wanted to join the Mennonites. On one occasion, against the advice of his associates, he baptized a woman from another faith but with a local official present. Donner had rejected the suggestion of quietly accepting her on her confession of faith, thus avoiding possible official censure; however, there were no negative repercussions from government officials. This may well have reflected the community respect that he enjoyed rather than the openness of the officials.[65]

Sometimes, however, Donner encountered opposition from within the Mennonite churches themselves. Elder Jacob Siebert of the Thiensdorf congregation contended that Mennonites were breaking agreements with



Anno 1774.

d 20. Septembr.

Habe ich in diesem
Buche angefangen aufzu-
schreiben, was sich in mei-
nem Hause zutragen;
und meine
Bekehrung mit Gott
zugetragen,

Hendrich Donner,

Schönecke,

Mein Gott bewahre in Gnaden,
vor allem Fall und Schaden,
mich und das ganzen Land,
lasse und stärck stets Liebe,
und Einigkeit beständig,
vor die sein Feind und Rotten,
die sogen seine Lehre,
das sich Lutherisch nennen,
in und Catholisch Land,
damit wir nicht verderben,
wie all die Heiden sterben,
gehe ein zur Ewigkeit Amen.

Herr gib uns Friede, und Einigkeit
das unsere ganze Lebenszeit,
damit das mein ganzes Haus,
vor allen Trennung ward behütet,
ja das wir all ein Herz und Sinn
die folgen o Immanuel, Amen.

Cover page of Heinrich Donner's *Chronik* (State Archives, Gdańsk). Here, as well as in the chronicle of the Orlofferfelde Church, Donner recorded his views on a variety of events.

governments if they tried to win converts to the Mennonite churches.[66] Donner disagreed sharply, insisting that other churches should not be permitted to control Mennonite policy. He further stated that children of mixed marriages should be free to join Mennonite churches. Similarly, Donner welcomed adults from other confessions and saw no violation of official policy if he did so. Moreover, such persons were to be baptized upon profession of faith, since Donner was not prepared to recognize infant baptism as biblical baptism. Although he was well aware that other religious groups objected, he championed his position vigorously.

On this matter, Donner encountered strong opposition, for some church leaders felt that baptizing persons on their profession of faith, when they had already been baptized as infants, created unnecessary tension. Donner invited those who held different opinions to join in a discussion and examination of the teaching on baptism. A number of church leaders came to discuss the issue and joined Donner in a fellowship meal, but they did not reach consensus. The question remained a matter for further discussion; Donner, however, continued to re-baptize those baptized as infants who now wished to join the Mennonite Church.[67]

Donner worked hard to maintain good relations with local government officials and kept them informed of his actions. As a rule, they raised no objections.[68] Within the larger Mennonite community, however, the question of how to accept members from other faiths but still retain the good will of authorities long remained a contentious issue. Officially approved churches, whether Catholic or Lutheran, opposed Donner's policy, and many Mennonites did not wish to alienate them. However, Donner not only maintained such practices in his own congregation, the Orlofferfelde Church, but he also came to the assistance of other churches that encountered opposition when they baptized and accepted into membership persons who came from other faith traditions.[69] At times humor and expediency may have eased the situation. When a Lutheran widower married a baptized Mennonite woman who had been a servant in his home, he was asked whether he had married her for her wealth or her beauty. He replied, "Neither for wealth nor beauty, for she lacked both."[70] Rather, he said, his dying wife had urged him to marry this servant, for she would take good care of the household.

Mennonites and Community Schools

From the beginning of Mennonite settlements in Royal Prussia until the seizure of the region by Frederick II in the late eighteenth century, Mennonites displayed a determination to provide schooling for their children. If a Mennonite village had a church building, it would usually also serve as a school. If not, instruction was given in homes. Schools are reported in Montau and in Gross Lubin as early as the sixteenth century. A lease agreement for the Mennonite settlement in Schönsee near Montau early in the 1600s mentions a school; another agreement, dated 1694, mentions a Mennonite school in Upper and Lower Gruppe. In the Large Werder, villages with a sizeable Mennonite majority often had their own schools; in other instances, Mennonite children attended Lutheran or Catholic schools. Religious instruction was an important part of the curriculum, and since Mennonites were a minority, usually Catholic or Lutheran instruction was given. Naturally, the Catholic priest or Lutheran pastor hoped to make converts of the Mennonite students.[71] Similar practices were part of normal village life in the delta and in city territories as well as up the Vistula. Building schools was, of course, not unique to Mennonites, and it was fortunate for them that they came to regions where education of children was recognized as important. It was customary for each village to have a school, although attendance was not always compulsory in early times.

The collection of funds for the maintenance of schools was sometimes a matter of disagreement since church and school levies were closely related. Records show that Mennonites in the delta had their own schools in the Ellerwald, Heubuden, and some other villages, but reports do not always indicate when these schools were first organized. Where villages were established on crown lands, teachers received their salaries from the royal treasury.[72] In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there were no uniform policies covering curriculum, teacher qualifications, or conditions in the schools. Sometimes, however, village parents demanded increased instruction for their children, and such a situation provided opportunity for greater community involvement in shaping school policy.[73] Of course, educational opportunities in towns and cities were significantly greater than those in small villages.

Education in Royal Prussia, as in many other parts of Europe, was

closely tied to changes in the church. As the Reformation gained adherents in parts of the Vistula Delta and beyond, control of schools sometimes became a contentious issue, especially when members of a city council were members of different religious faiths. For example, the Danzig city council sometimes had Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed members. City councils and local religious leaders frequently shared oversight of schools, with the council setting basic policy and the local clergyman acting as overseer of the teacher. In lands under Catholic episcopal jurisdiction, it was the local bishop who both set policy and established procedures for conducting and supervising schools.

As Mennonites settled in widespread areas, they often found themselves in places where they formed only a part of the larger community and where schools were designed to accommodate all children in the vicinity. Where the land in the Danzig Werder was owned by the city, the city council issued guidelines that indicated rather forward-looking goals and policies. One directive outlining objectives in local schools is highly informative. Issued in 1601, the document stipulated that all children should go to school when they reached their seventh year. This included both boys and girls. School attendance was to continue at least until a child could read and write, and knew Luther's catechism. Further education was also encouraged. At harvest time, parents were permitted to keep their children at home to help bring in the crop. A related directive stipulated that on Sundays, parents were to bring their children to the morning service, and in the afternoon bring them to hear instruction in the catechism. Even if parents did not send children to school, they were required to pay school dues for the teacher's salary.[74]

Apparently, some villagers were not diligent in observing such directives, for in 1637 and again in 1640, a stern council admonition warned that parents who did not send their children, both boys and girls, to school would be subject to fines, including paying twice the amount of the normal assessment for a teacher's salary. The fact that villagers were warned not to disturb a teacher during the time when school was in session further illustrates the high regard for teachers and education. Another mandate, issued in 1655, explicitly stated that all children should go to school from their seventh to their fourteenth year. In that same year the city council issued a broad policy directive stipulating that teachers could be appointed only if they had been examined and approved by the local pastor.[75] Clearly,

schools were seen as partners with the church in educating the children. Gradually, the council also developed a system for inspecting schools to see if they were observing the outlined policies.

Educational guidelines were issued and revised repeatedly. Then, as in later times, advocates of education frequently lamented shortcomings. In 1707, directives issued for schools in the Danzig Werder sounded an age-old complaint: "Alas! Since everywhere great ignorance is evident among our young people,"[76] corrective measures were to be adopted. Ministers were to visit the schools weekly or oftener, both to examine the teaching methods and to determine the growth in knowledge of the students. Records do not indicate just how effective such policies were, but the fact that reports repeatedly called for more effective educational approaches suggests that no panacea was found. Nonetheless, some policies seem remarkably progressive. A report on a school in the Werder village of Petershagen noted with satisfaction that instruction was available in both Polish and German.

Schools in the Ellerwald, a region largely settled by Mennonites, reflected some typical educational policies. The area was governed in accordance with stated policies developed by the Elbing city council, and these policies included children's education in their purview. On 10 February 1565, the town council issued official policy statements for village life. Revealing the strong role of the church in education, the "constitution" stipulated that all persons living in the Ellerwald should live godly lives and attend church regularly. In addition, no nonessential work was to be performed on Sunday. On this day, no beer or liquor was to be sold, nor was there to be dancing in public buildings. Parents were to be responsible for regular school attendance by their children. This latter directive, however, was not always enforced, for in a number of villages attendance was voluntary, and schools were sometimes maintained by voluntary local organizations, which also might select teachers. In other communities, attendance might be compulsory, and school support assured by systematic collection of school taxes. In the Ellerwald, the large Mennonite population sometimes had two schools; at other times, floods forced changes in location as well as number of schools.[77]

In the Vistula Valley, between the delta and Thorn, there was great variation in education policies. In a few instances, as in Montau, Mennonites were permitted to have their own schools or to conduct classes in

their church buildings. Lutherans also established schools, but they increasingly found that Catholic bishops were determined to control education. Thus, in 1745 the parish of Sibsau near Schwetz recorded 308 Catholic, 203 Lutheran, and 236 Mennonite school children. Pressure from the local bishop eventually brought almost all schools in surrounding villages under his control.[78] Similar episcopal policies were implemented in the Lubin parish, where 85 Lutheran, 94 Mennonite, and 9 Catholic farm owners all had to contribute to the maintenance of five schools under Catholic direction.[79] Likewise, in Schönsee, where Mennonites had been given extensive privileges as early as the late sixteenth century, an unsympathetic official in 1725 declared that although "the parish is filled with many Anabaptists or Mennonites,"[80] payment of (Catholic) church and school dues should be rigorously enforced.

Toleration but not Equality

As in the case of the Lubin and Schönsee schools, Mennonites frequently learned that, although some bishops or other authorities might grant privileges, subsequent officials might insist on renegotiation of a given practice. Thus, on 12 September 1732, Gabriel Frantz and Hinrich Nickel, two ministers of the Schönsee congregation, wrote to the Mennonites in Amsterdam, alarmed that the local bishop had indicated that the long-held privileges of the Mennonites needed to be reevaluated.[81] The ministers, apparently convinced that the prelate was more interested in getting more money than in changing religious practices, asked the Dutch for financial assistance. As usual, the churches in the Netherlands responded generously. Frantz and Nickel offered the bishop 4,000 florins, only to be informed that this was not a matter of money; rather, he was interested in the welfare of souls. The two ministers suspected, however, that what was at stake here was not the salvation of souls but the size of the gift. A letter to the Mennonites in Amsterdam dated 20 April 1733 validated the assumption of the Schönsee ministers. When the donation was increased to 10,000 florins, the ministers were invited to meet with the bishop. Upon reconsideration, he had decided to "affirm their old privileges."[82] Variations of this transaction formed part of the Mennonite story in Royal Prussia; both secular and religious leaders could make adjustments when the price was right.

Both Lutherans and Mennonites found that religious freedom did not mean equality in political, educational, social, or religious structures. Similarly, in those places where Lutherans gained control, they also insisted that Mennonites continue to pay the traditional dues. Nonetheless, a Polish king or administrator might grant exemptions from paying dues, especially if catastrophic floods or other calamities had robbed the Mennonites of their livelihood. In rare instances, an official might even grant exemptions from regular church dues because the Mennonites "are dissidents and do not belong to the Roman church."[83] Such a statement as one issued by King John Sobieski in 1689 offering relief to Gross and Klein Lubin and Dragass occasionally allowed Mennonites to overcome temporary financial difficulties; it also encouraged them not to move to other areas.

Throughout the two and a half centuries that Mennonites lived under the Polish crown, they confronted a myriad of challenges. Repeated efforts to impose greater economic restrictions and religious limitations were usually overcome with the help of political, civic, and religious leaders. Not infrequently, the judicious use of monetary suasion helped to alleviate problematic situations, and attempts at religious coercion were successfully resisted. Although the attitudes of different authority figures might change, Mennonites always had their supporters. They were free to practice their faith, pursue a variety of means for earning a livelihood, engage in different trades and businesses, send their children to school, and move to other areas or lands if they chose to do so. In comparison with life in most other societies in early modern Europe, Mennonites in Royal Prussia had reason to be grateful.

CHAPTER 8

Conflicting Loyalties in a Progressive Society

Mennonites who came to Royal Prussia in the early sixteenth century brought with them distinctive beliefs about the relationship between church and state, beliefs that distinguished them from those of many other faiths. Mennonite views on pacifism in particular elicited special concern. Although some of the early Anabaptists in Germany, the Netherlands, and other parts of Western Europe did not accept pacifism, the branch of Anabaptism associated with Menno Simons, including those adherents who moved to the Vistula Delta, largely shared the view that followers of Christ should not engage in war. Killing other persons, whether these were other believers, "heretics," or "infidels" denounced in crusades, was regarded as a violation of Christ's teachings. As Wilhelm Mannhardt noted, from their earliest settlement in Royal Prussia, Mennonites in that region affirmed their adherence to a peace position, which rejected war.[1] Mennonite statements of faith usually strongly affirmed showing love in all situations, even in war. Participation in armed conflict was seen as a repudiation of Christ's teaching on how to respond to those who used violence.

Some Christian humanists, such as Erasmus, also condemned war. In his *Complaint of Peace*, Erasmus denounced war and decried the selfish ambition and greed that led princes and other political leaders to go to war

with each other. In this treatise, he lamented that even bishops and the pope himself resorted to armed struggle to achieve territorial and economic gain. As a consequence, Erasmus concluded, Europe engaged in civil wars, where brothers within the church fought each other. Surely there must be a better way to resolve disputes.

Some Mennonite leaders used Erasmus as an example of a renowned and respected intellectual leader who opposed war. Menno made a number of positive references to him. Similarly, in 1693 Engel Arentson of Doregeest, minister of the Mennonites in Ryp, the Netherlands, wrote to a professor of the University of Leyden, explaining why Mennonites rejected participation in war. He appealed to Scripture, to history, and also to Erasmus specifically, stating that this Christian humanist had condemned war in part because of the suffering inflicted on the innocent. Arentson noted Erasmus's statement that especially the poor, women, and children suffered because of the evil actions of those in power.[2] Others, such as Sebastian Franck, Jacob Hutter, the Polish Brethren, and a number of individuals within Catholic and Protestant churches, similarly denounced warfare as incompatible with the lives of the children of God and based their position on their understanding of the Scriptures.[3]

For Mennonites coming into the Vistula Delta from the Netherlands and elsewhere, the sayings and life of Christ as well as other passages of Scripture provided the basis for their insistence on nonviolence. This belief was reflected in numerous statements of faith as well as in some of the writings of early leaders. Menno Simons had repeatedly emphasized that followers of Christ should demonstrate love rather than going to war. A letter he wrote to "the children of God in the land of Prussia" in 1549 reflects this irenic position and encourages efforts to bring harmony and peace within the congregation.[4] The document itself does not discuss war, since that was not a question within the congregation; however, in Menno's extensive writings he did vigorously champion a peace theology.[5] Dutch and other Mennonites repeatedly affirmed such views.[6]

Mennonites who came to Royal Prussia repeatedly based their emphasis on peace on their understanding of Scripture. At the same time, they realized that their views were different from those of most of society and that they would have to find a way to relate to their communities. They realized that they were members of a society that seemed to view war as normal; it was part of establishing and defending the state or the interests

of the state, as defined by its rulers. Armies consisted largely of mercenaries hired for a specific time or task. Universal military service did not exist, but citizens of cities might be called on to defend themselves at any time. Willingness to engage in such military action was regarded as a duty to society. Many persons in early modern times were still bound to their villages and subordinate to the local lord or other holder of political authority. Participation in war depended on the status and role of the persons concerned. Mennonites who wished to become citizens of a town were faced with the demand that all citizens of a town had to be ready to come to its defense. Since Mennonites usually refused military service, this often aroused resentment among the general populace and also usually effectively barred Mennonites from becoming citizens. Often this also meant that they could not live in the town proper, but only in its suburbs. For those Mennonites living on the land, military obligations were often simply met by making financial payments. Local lords, however, had wide jurisdiction in determining how much Mennonites would pay for the land they leased, and in times of war, they could impose special taxes in lieu of military service.

In this context, the Mennonite belief in pacifism did not necessarily cause problems with the authorities, other than that Mennonites were usually not accepted as burghers, or citizens, but rather as residents with restricted rights. Ordinarily, they could work and conduct trade in towns but not live in them, so they resided in suburbs owned by the town, churches and monasteries, nobles, or the king.

Mennonites and the Demands of the State

The earliest Mennonites coming to the Vistula Delta were not subjected to careful doctrinal examinations. However, as their numbers increased and a number of Mennonites settled in cities or on city-owned land, tensions arose between them and other religious groups. Leaders in Danzig and elsewhere began to ask exactly what the beliefs of the Mennonites were. This concern became especially pronounced as Counter-Reformation forces moved resolutely against dissenting religious views. Church and state worked together to achieve their goals, whether this involved Catholic or Protestant rulers.

In view of the frequent assertion that Mennonites were "heretics," it

is not surprising that they were often asked by kings, bishops, or other authorities to give written statements about their faith. Early Mennonite confessional statements in Royal Prussia, such as those of 1660 and 1678, contained the often-quoted reference to Jesus' response to the Old Testament statement about "an eye for an eye." Mennonites were called to love their enemies, and "not seek vengeance against one's enemies."[7]

Kings of Poland, like their counterparts in other countries, involved themselves directly in religious issues. Here they sometimes encountered opposition from city councils. No doubt this reflected a city's determination to control its own affairs. In 1670, King Michael, acting on the advice of his councilors, ordered the Mennonite leaders Cornelius and Behrend de Veer, Abraham van Beuningen, Johan Siemons, Erdmann Stobbe and some others to appear before the king's emissary to face charges of heresy (Arianism). When these men asked the Danzig city council for advice, the council emphatically insisted that the king had no right to meddle in the city's internal affairs and instructed the Mennonites not to appear.

Evidently later kings were more respectful of Danzig's prerogatives, for when King John III Sobieski came to the city in 1678, Mennonite leaders were asked to explain their religious beliefs (see chap. 7). The city did not object, but this time the interrogators came to discuss, not necessarily to condemn. The interrogation, conducted by Bishop Stanisław Sarnowski, covered a wide variety of teachings and also included a question regarding the Mennonite attitude toward war and government. When asked if Mennonites permitted taking revenge against one's enemies, the minister Hendrick van Duhren responded that in Matthew 5:43, Christ had forbidden such action.[8] On the matter of Mennonite participation in government and military action, he responded that holding office at the local level was permissible, but not at a high level because this might require the taking of oaths and participation in "the shedding of blood."[9]

Another of the ministers, Georg Hansen, gave fairly detailed written responses about various tenets of Mennonite faith.[10] In this, as well as in other writings, Hansen demonstrated that pacifism was a basic belief of the Mennonites, and he supported this position by references to the sayings and life of Christ, as well as other passages in Scripture.[11] Correspondence with Mennonite churches in the Netherlands at this time shows clearly that Mennonites in both regions shared this view.[12]

In Elbing, Mennonites were also subjected to scrutiny of their religious

beliefs. Already in the 1570s, guild members complained about economic setbacks because Mennonites were establishing themselves in the city. Some Lutheran ministers urged the expulsion of Mennonites from the city and its adjacent land holdings.[13] The city council demurred because the city benefited from the economic activities of Mennonite craftsmen and traders. Furthermore, Mennonite farmers were regarded as particularly desirable settlers, since they were making city-owned marshlands to the west, such as the Ellerwald, profitable. The city made some half-hearted efforts at expulsion, but Mennonites remained part of the Elbing landscape.[14] When King Sigismund III wrote to Elbing in 1615, urging the city to require Mennonites to accept full responsibility as citizens, the directive was ignored. This royal demand was renewed in 1635, but again the council declined to do so.[15]

On the other hand, prominent Mennonites were allowed to become Elbing citizens and to pay an assessment in lieu of military service. This established a precedent, even though it would be challenged later. Moreover, Mennonites were permitted to affirm with a simple "yes" or "no" rather than to swear an oath. Some historians have noted that Mennonites were subjected to discriminatory policies in that they had to pay higher taxes or assessments in various economic pursuits. In fairness, however, it should be noted that this reflected the fact that Mennonites refused to bear arms as regular citizens, or to swear oaths of loyalty in the customary format.[16] Compared to conditions in many other parts of Europe, the situation in Elbing at this time suggests an unusual openness and tolerance. Despite their religious distinctives, by 1590 Mennonites were allowed to have their own church building in Elbing, to live in the city as well as on city land, to engage in most occupations, and to adhere to their religious beliefs.

The Struggle for Tolerance in Royal Prussia

Because of their historical development and their support of the Polish monarch during the war with the Teutonic Knights, cities such as Danzig and Elbing functioned largely as independent cities under the crown. Through this means they were able to control most of their external and internal affairs, including matters of religion. In both Danzig and Elbing, the Lutheran Reformation gained dominance. Lutherans shared power

with Catholics, and for a time efforts were made to exclude other Protestant faiths. However, Mennonites were not alone in being subjected to religious discrimination.

The growth of Protestantism along with other faiths in Poland was a factor in shaping the dramatic statement adopted by the Confederation of Warsaw in 1573, as noted earlier. There were some smaller states and towns in Europe where rulers adopted policies that provided for limited toleration, as in the case of Philip of Hesse, who refused to permit execution of heretics in his lands. Also, the northern Netherlands adopted a policy of toleration when they gained independence. However, no major country in 1573 had an official policy comparable to the one adopted by the *Sejm* meeting in Warsaw in that year. At the same time, Polish adoption of toleration did not mean that all faiths would be treated equally. Despite disagreements, however, various religious groups in Danzig and elsewhere in Royal Prussia agreed that religious issues would be resolved by diplomacy and at least a measure of mutual respect, rather than by war.

Mennonites in the Vistula Delta

Mennonites in the delta lived under a variety of political jurisdictions. Owners of lands included the king, the Catholic Church, nearby cities, nobles, and others. The common thread uniting the landowners and rulers was a desire to make their lands productive, and in that goal Mennonites played a significant role. Early arrangements between landlords and Mennonites specified that the settlers would be free from the responsibility of quartering troops. Documents usually made no specific reference to exemption from military obligations, but at this time farmers were unlikely to be called into military service. However, as tenants of farms, they might be expected to assume some military obligations that were traditionally carried by those who farmed the land. In such instances they could make payments in lieu of military service. Sometimes, as political changes occurred and new owners and leaders took over previous arrangements, obligations were called into question. Problems arose when Mennonites acquired more land without accepting the military obligation attached to that land. They were prepared to make payments in lieu of military service, but not to bear arms. Rulers were not necessarily satisfied with that.

Growth of Intolerance in Royal Prussia

A special challenge arose for the Mennonites when the king, together with the national *Sejm*, moved against the Socinians (Unitarians) because of their antitrinitarian views. Denial of the Trinity had long been viewed as a capital offense by both Catholics and Protestants. Calvin's approval of the burning of Michael Servetus, who had been condemned by both Catholic and Calvinist courts, illustrated this widely held view. In 1658, when Polish authorities decided to expel the Socinians, some leaders suggested that Anabaptists, specifically Mennonites, should be included in this expulsion. Again, protection came from the royal court. In 1660 King John Casimir issued a decree stating that Mennonites living on crown lands in the Tiegenhof area, whose recognized agricultural skills contributed significantly to the royal coffers, stood under royal protection. Furthermore, any local laws issued against Mennonites were declared null and void.[17] Once again, royal decree had come to the aid of Mennonites. It should be noted that Polish kings usually considered local conditions as well as wishes of local authorities before issuing specific decrees.

An exception in the practice of extending royal support to Mennonites can be seen in the erratic policies of King Michael Korybut. His brief reign (1669–73) demonstrated how unscrupulous advisors at court could make life uncomfortable for Mennonites. Twice royal officials came to Danzig to convince the city council to collect "gifts" from the Mennonites. The council bluntly served notice that it, not the crown, imposed taxes. When the royal official threatened expulsion of Mennonites and demanded that their representatives meet with him, the council forbade such a meeting, praised the achievements of Mennonites, and sent the emissary away empty-handed.[18]

Some form of pressure, however, whether political, economic, or religious, was virtually always part Mennonite life. At a time when the Catholic Counter-Reformation was gaining strength and Protestantism, especially Calvinism, was losing ground in the ranks of the nobility, Catholic prelates often tried to use the weakening of Protestant influence as an opportunity to move against Mennonites. Thus, despite earlier royal declarations of toleration of Mennonites, in 1676 the *voivode* (governor) of Pomerelia noted that recently dikes along the Vistula and Nogat had broken, causing considerable damage. This, he suggested, might be God's

way of punishing the country for tolerating heretics such as the Mennonites. This time, representatives from Marienburg defended the Mennonites and suggested that the country needed more such people. Representatives from other cities supported those from Marienburg, and no action was taken against the Mennonites.[19]

When this attempt was repeated at the next national *Sejm*, another delegate quietly informed the king that the *voivode* was urging this action because this would bring him significant new income. King John III Sobieski denounced the *voivode*'s position and ordered that the document already drawn up by the *voivode* proposing legislation against the Mennonites be torn up.[20] The king declared the Mennonites to be under his special protection, and in 1694 he issued another decree confirming traditional liberties of Mennonites and stating that these rights applied to all Mennonites in the Werder, irrespective of the positions taken by local owners or land administrators. With respect to religion, the king expressly stated that the "free exercise of the Mennonite religion" was hereby confirmed.[21]

Crucial Role of Kings and City Councils

Sometimes it was a change of rulers that opened opportunities for opponents of the Mennonites to denounce them as undesirable heretics. When Augustus II, newly elected king from Saxony, assumed the Polish throne in 1699, renewed efforts were made to link Mennonites to antitrinitarians. The latter, of course, had been expelled earlier. After some delay occasioned by war with Sweden, Mennonites found support at the royal court. The king, noting that his predecessors had invited the Mennonites from Holland, gave an unusually comprehensive overview of Mennonite liberties. These included free exercise of their religion; the right to observe baptism and the Lord's Supper according to their own beliefs; permission to bury their dead, including children, in regular church cemeteries; and permission to conduct their own schools and hire their own teachers. Anyone who sought to curtail these rights would be subject to prosecution by the appropriate authorities. The document was one of several issued by the king, and reflected his determination to defend the Mennonites.[22]

Succeeding kings issued similar decrees. In 1736, Augustus III confirmed all previously granted privileges of the Mennonites;[23] and in 1764, Poland's last king, Stanisław Augustus, reaffirmed this position.[24] Thus,

throughout the time when Mennonites lived in the Vistula Delta before the area (except for Danzig) was seized by Prussia, Polish kings repeatedly safeguarded traditional religious liberties. They upheld these liberties despite attacks from elements of both Catholic and Lutheran clergy, from government officials at local and national levels, or from protagonists of a variety of economic interests.

South of the delta and up the Vistula River, a number of Mennonite settlements stretched all the way to Thorn, then eastward toward Warsaw. Mennonites who settled in these areas came from varied regions, including the Netherlands, North Germany, Moravia, Switzerland, and parts of South Germany. Like the Mennonites in the delta, in many instances they had fled religious oppression in their homelands and had come to find religious liberty. Some of the local lords, royal officials, and landowners proved even more accommodating than those in the delta. That Mennonites in the Montau region had their own church building as early as 1586 is evidence of this.

Like Mennonites in the delta, those living in the valley of the Vistula as it stretched from beyond Warsaw to Danzig lived in villages and towns that were under the jurisdiction of a variety of overlords. Sometimes religious liberties were negotiated locally; at other times, the royal court issued a decree intended for the entire realm. Thus, in 1750 King Augustus III noted that Mennonites living in the territories of "Graudenz, Schwetz, Neuenburg, and those who live in other parts of Prussia . . . have protested that they have been subjected to injustices, and curtailment of practice of their Mennonite religion."[25] He further declared that Mennonites were to have "all rights, privileges, freedoms, and customary practices in the exercise of their religion"[26] assured them by previous monarchs. The royal decree went on to assert that Mennonites had the right to establish their own schools, observe baptism and communion according to their custom, perform weddings, maintain their own cemeteries, and teach their young people Mennonite beliefs. This sweeping affirmation of Mennonite privileges was issued in the same year that the king supported the guilds of Danzig in their efforts to curtail competition from Mennonite craftsmen. The king, evidently, was able to distinguish between religious and economic privileges.

Despite a variety of challenges, in the more than two centuries between the coming of the Mennonites to Royal Prussia and the end of Polish rule

in this area, Mennonites adhered to pacifism. Sometimes this privilege was bought at considerable price. Toward the end of Polish rule in the area, it is apparent that Mennonites in the Werder had some advantages over those in Danzig, even though pacifism was respected in both jurisdictions. Hans van Steen, minister in Danzig, expressed some of his concern when he wrote to a friend in the Netherlands and noted that Mennonites in Danzig, whether within or outside the walls, had to pay a protection fee because they held to their pacifist position. He went on to state that Mennonites under Catholic authorities in the Vistula Delta fared better than those under Protestant control[27] because the former granted greater religious and economic freedom. Van Steen further noted that in some other cities under Lutheran control, such as Thorn and Marienburg, Mennonites were being denied rights of residence.

Mennonites in Time of War

Since Mennonites lived in the Vistula Delta and along the river, Poland's major avenue of transport, military forces often traversed their communities. On one such occasion in 1703, when King Charles XII of Sweden was waging war in Poland, his army laid siege to Thorn. Mennonites in the vicinity were required to provide food for the troops. A Mennonite chronicle records that when King Charles learned of the Mennonites and of their opposition to war, he expressed interest in hearing more about their rationale for such a position. Steffen Funk, evidently an immigrant from Moravia[28] and now a Mennonite minister in a local congregation, was summoned to the king, who asked on what basis Mennonites held such a view. Funk replied, "On the basis of Scripture."[29] The king then asked the minister to present a sermon on this subject, and two weeks later Funk addressed the king, the army chaplain, and various officers on the biblical basis for this position. After the sermon, when the subordinates had left, the king said to Funk, "You have strongly established your teachings, but surely Scripture must make some distinction between various kinds of wars." Funk replied, "Scripture does not permit war." "Not at all?" the king asked. Funk replied that one could argue that in some instances there might be biblical grounds for defending one's country, but certainly not for invading another country and laying it desolate. The king was impressed and presented Funk with a gift. Later, Funk visited the army en-

campment again and was received with honor. The king asserted that he would take care to have as few casualties as possible in taking the city.

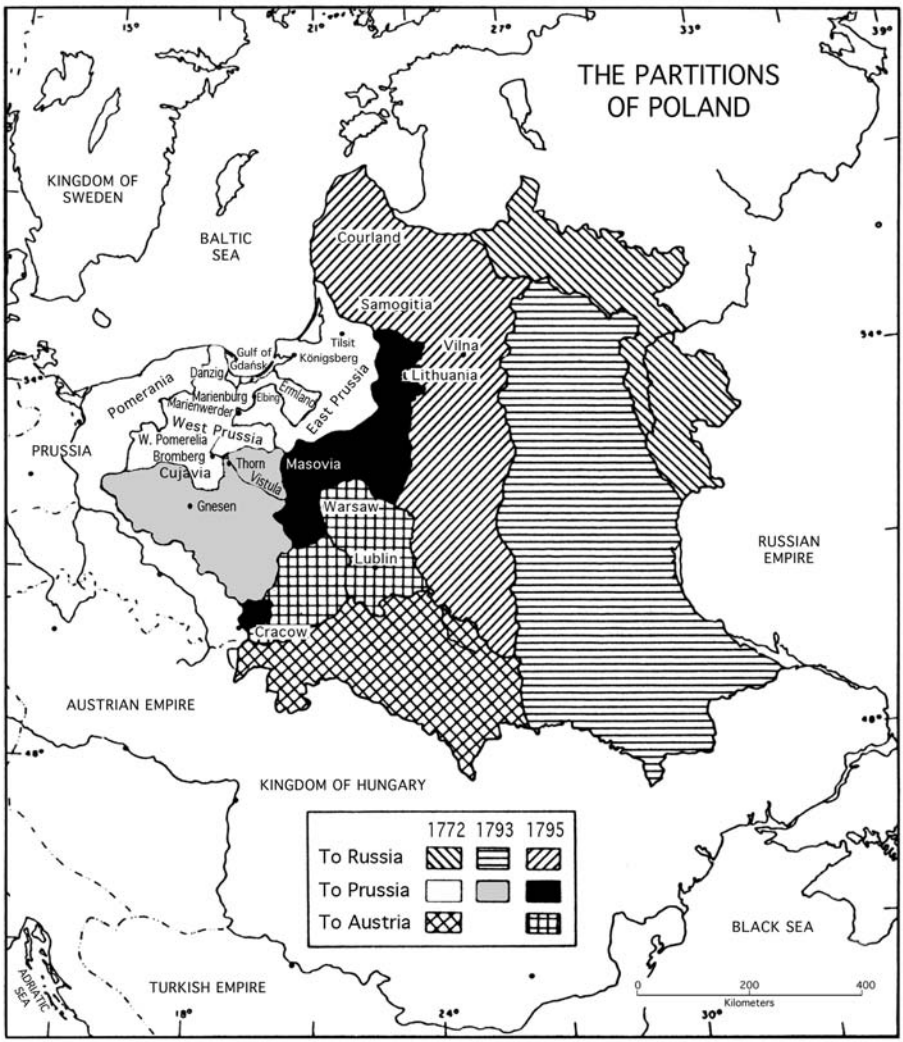
The Cost of Toleration

The price that Mennonites paid to maintain their religious beliefs varied from place to place, and from time to time. For example, when Mennonites came to Danzig, they were permitted to live on land owned by the city or by the Catholic Church outside the city; nonetheless, they could conduct business in the city. Then, when war with Sweden in the 1650s led Danzig authorities to destroy some of the city's suburbs, including two Mennonite churches—ostensibly so that the enemy would not be able to take advantage of them—twenty-one Mennonite families were permitted to move into the city temporarily.[30] Gradually, this number grew, and after the war the Mennonites were permitted to rebuild their two churches just outside the city walls.

Danzig established the practice of requiring Mennonites to pay for soldiers hired to take their places during wartime. Later, during the War of the Polish Succession (1733–35),[31] Mennonites distinguished themselves in civilian service when they served as firefighters during the bombardment of the city, thus preventing the besiegers from starting a major fire.[32] After the war, when Augustus III was able to assert his authority, he imposed an annual tax of 5,000 florins on Mennonites in Danzig and its territory. Later, this assessment was reduced to 2,000, and then, in 1774, after Danzig had lost most of its landed possessions, to 1,500 florins.

Just two years earlier, in 1772, the world of the Vistula Delta experienced major change when Frederick the Great of Prussia occupied almost all of it. The new king imposed a tax of 5,000 florins on the Mennonites in the seized territories, thus introducing a practice that had already been implemented in the city of Danzig. Now, in both the city and the delta, even though Danzig was not yet under Frederick's control, Mennonites were able to maintain their exemption from military service through a combination of civilian service in wartime and payment of additional taxes.

For almost two and a half centuries, whether under Protestant or Catholic rule, Mennonites had successfully resisted external pressures to abandon their pacifist position. No one could predict exactly how the strongly



Map of the Partitions of Poland (drawn by Gail Enns).

centralized new Prussian rule would affect Mennonite life and faith as the Mennonite communities of the lowlands as well as those up the Vistula were brought under Frederick's rule. Danzig and Thorn retained their status as virtually free cities under the Polish crown for a time, but Frederick initiated economic pressures and blockades, resulting in the loss of their relative prosperity. Now imports and exports were taxed as Frederick tried to force the cities to bow to his will.

In the delta, where most Mennonites lived, there was some reason to hope for a lenient policy from the king, at least in religious matters. Mennonite leaders had joined in paying homage to Frederick at a royal celebration in Marienburg in 1772, and on that occasion had given Frederick a petition for the maintenance of traditional liberties. In less than a month, the king issued a statement telling Mennonites that these liberties would be respected. However, when the new government began taking a census, Mennonite leaders expressed their concern that this might be a step toward demanding military service. The Prussian government responded with a reaffirmation of religious liberties, including exemption from military service and the right to have their own churches and schools. Nevertheless, they were forbidden to buy land from non-Mennonites, except by special permission of the war ministry, since military obligations were based on land ownership.

The royal government wanted a census in order to get a more complete picture of the number of Mennonites living in the territory newly acquired from Poland (now given the name of West Prussia) and to enumerate those living in East Prussia as well. This indicated that 13,495 Mennonites resided in this region (excluding Danzig).[33] Mennonite leaders were now informed that they as a body would be responsible for paying 5,000 thalers for the support of a military academy in Kulm.[34] How this sum should be raised was their responsibility. Mennonites remained concerned about the census and sent several delegations to the king over the next several years in an attempt to get a formal declaration concerning exemption from military service.[35] They also requested exemption from paying dues to Catholic or Protestant churches, but that issue would not be settled for decades.

The Struggle for Greater Legal Equality

In 1777 Mennonite leaders yet again formally petitioned Frederick to relax restrictions on what they regarded as economic opportunity and rightful pursuit of a livelihood. Delegates Heinrich Donner, elder of the Orlofferfelde Mennonite Church, and Johann Busenitz from the Marienburg congregation, went to Berlin to request relaxation of land-acquisition policies, freedom from paying dues to Catholic and Lutheran churches,

and an easing of regulations governing intermarriage.[36] In addition, they requested a reduction or elimination of the special military assessment.

This was to be one of several such journeys. The king was not ready to grant all requests, but he did issue a "Resolution" assuring the Mennonites of his good will toward them and his concern about their well-being. On a subsequent trip to Berlin and the royal court in Potsdam, the emissaries personally delivered their "memorial" directly to the king and were assured that a specific statement would be issued.

Eventually, in 1780, Frederick issued the long-awaited *Gnaden Privilegium* (gracious charter of liberties), as the document was officially described. It declared Mennonites exempt from military service "forever" (*auf ewig*).[37] The promise made by the king in 1772 was now formally recognized and documented. The liberties that Mennonites had enjoyed under Polish rule were also confirmed by a Prussian king. Frederick thus gave expression to his dictum that all people should be free to find salvation in their own way. In addition, as subsequent events showed, the prohibition against Mennonites acquiring more land was rather loosely interpreted, and some alarmists warned that if Mennonite acquisition of land were not curtailed, they would soon hold "the entire Werder."[38]

This practice, however, was to change when Frederick died in 1786. Frederick William II, his successor, almost immediately issued an order prohibiting the acquisition of additional landed property, except by special permission. Another land-related issue, that of paying church assessments to Catholics and Lutheran churches, continued to be a matter of contention. When Mennonites acquired land formerly held by Catholics or Lutherans, either through marriage, inheritance, or some form of purchase, they resisted the continued payment of church dues, but to no avail. In 1788 a Lutheran official in Neuteich (Nowy Staw) declared that 10 of 18 Lutheran parishes would be unable to continue if Mennonites were freed of these assessments.[39] Several such instances were referred to the courts; however, the court usually ruled that whoever owned the land was responsible for the payment of church dues associated with that property.

In Danzig, meanwhile, the desperate attempt to maintain self-government under the Polish king became ever more difficult. When Frederick acquired most of the delta in 1772, he quickly imposed taxes on goods

coming into the city as well as on exports. From that time until 1793, when the Prussian king seized Danzig, these tensions remained. Many of the Danzig Mennonites, including Pastor Hans van Steen, expressed opposition to Prussian designs on the city, and this political issue created some tension in the Mennonite community. When a visiting minister from the Delta included the king of Prussia in his morning prayer at a Danzig city Mennonite church, he was quickly reminded that Danzig was under the king of Poland, not the king of Prussia. In a more humorous vein, the artist Daniel Chodowiecki, on a visit to Danzig, the city of his birth, recorded an anecdote about Mennonite perceptions of the Prussian king: A Mennonite farmer was driving a wagon into the city and had removed his coat. When asked why he was wearing only a vest, he responded, "I am a West [vest] Prussian; the king of Prussia has taken our coat and left us with only our vest."[40]

Mennonites under Increasingly Restrictive Prussian Rule

When Frederick the Great died in 1786, to be succeeded by Frederick William II, Mennonite leaders journeyed to Königsberg, the East Prussian capital, to show their loyalty to the new king. Once again, Donner and other Mennonite leaders requested that the traditional Mennonite liberties, and specifically the Charter of Liberties, be affirmed.[41] The new king indicated his willingness to support traditional rights, but at the same time, he moved quickly to tighten existing regulations. Some Mennonites felt that the *Gnaden Privilegium* also guaranteed economic liberty, including unrestricted acquisition of land. The new king responded that he had no intention of freeing additional land from the normal military obligations associated with that land. New decrees specified that the old laws would be tightened. Mennonite leaders responded by petitioning the king for a relaxation of prescribed restrictions.

However, this was not to be. The new king quickly demonstrated his intent. In an effort to clarify rights, liberties, and responsibilities of Mennonites in his kingdom, Frederick William II issued a lengthy "Edict for the Future Regulation of Mennonite Affairs" in 1789.[42] In this document, he affirmed the Mennonites' historic right to practice their religion and noted that this included a belief in pacifism. However, the state had to be prepared to defend itself—a responsibility, he noted, that most subjects

gladly accepted. The king insisted that the document constituted no infringement on Mennonite religious freedom; that was a personal matter. Nonetheless, it was clearly stated that he would let no group compromise his ability to defend the realm.

The document further declared that in the interests of national security, the king was determined to curtail Mennonite ownership of land. He also adopted measures designed to regain some of the land bought by Mennonites in order to return it to its earlier military obligations. Those Mennonites who wanted full freedom to acquire land could achieve that goal by accepting their military obligations as other subjects did. Such persons would also be freed from the obligatory payments for the cadet academy in Kulm. For anyone who would not accept military obligations, no expansion of land ownership would be permitted. For Mennonite families with several sons, there was now little prospect of acquiring more land. Acquisition of land was to be allowed only under special and pre-approved arrangements.

When Mennonite leaders sought some relaxation of these regulations, the king responded that this would pose a threat to the "defense of the Fatherland."[43] Mennonite Elder Heinrich Donner, deeply disturbed, asserted that some of his fellow ministers were not taking a strong enough stance against the king's declaration. He lamented that many seemed more concerned about personal freedom than about religious liberty and were willing only to say that war was contrary to a basic Mennonite belief. Donner contended that some elders were trying to escape their responsibility by saying they did not wish to offend the king or create a situation that would arouse opposition. Such a position, Donner concluded, showed that one was "ashamed of the Gospel."[44]

In fact, acquisition of land with military obligations was not the only difficulty confronting the Mennonites. They would have to pay the usual land-based dues to Lutheran schools and churches. When non-Mennonites who owed military service joined a Mennonite church, they were to pay for another person to take their place. Members of other church bodies could join the Mennonites, but children of such mixed marriages were to be reared in the faith of the non-Mennonite partner.[45] A subsequent ruling of the courts, however, declared that "in the King's lands, there is complete freedom of conscience." And it also clarified a long-standing dispute when it added: "Children of interfaith marriages must therefore

. . . be free to choose the Mennonite confession of faith."[46] Even so, when Elder Donner brought several non-Mennonite families into the membership of his church, some Mennonite leaders opposed such practices, asserting that this would jeopardize Mennonite liberties.[47] Additionally, no new Mennonite settlers were to be admitted into East or West Prussia. It was evident that Prussian rule represented an interpretation of religious liberty that was very different from what Mennonites had enjoyed under Polish kings.

Once again, Mennonites were confronted by a political and economic situation that forced them to examine how their religious convictions could find expression in a state that set new demands and then enforced them. For some, the prospect of emigration seemed preferable to living in a setting where tensions with the state as well as with related economic, political, and religious structures were likely to intensify. It was therefore not surprising that in the very year that Frederick William issued the edict of 1789, the first large group of Mennonite emigrants settled in New Russia. There they believed they would find greater liberties than under Prussian rule.

CHAPTER 9

A Changing Vision

This volume has primarily been devoted to the time when Mennonites lived in Royal Prussia. From the early sixteenth until the end of the eighteenth centuries, Mennonites were able to practice their beliefs under a Polish crown. With the end of Poland as a state and the emergence of Prussia, however, Mennonites faced intensified challenges of acculturation. It was a difficult struggle that lasted a century, and for some, at least, it never reached a satisfying conclusion.

The nineteenth century was a time of soul-searching for Mennonites in the new Prussia. The Poland to which their ancestors had come in the early part of the sixteenth century was now a memory. The ambitions and imperial designs of Austria, Prussia, and Russia had created some very different political, economic, and religious realities. The greatest challenge that Mennonites faced from the new order was the question of how long-held religious beliefs and practices would fare under the new regime. For Mennonites now living under a dynamic, progressive, and largely authoritarian state, the question of reconciling a refusal to bear arms with citizenship soon became acute. For a full century, Mennonites wrestled with this dilemma.

The Royal Prussia to which Mennonites emigrated in the sixteenth century had become part of a very different entity by the time of the Napoleonic Wars. Prussia, or Brandenburg-Prussia, now took its place among the major nations of Europe. Then, with the formation of the German Em-

pire in the latter half of the nineteenth century, Germany ranked as a great power. Through a series of swift, successful military actions, Prussia had emerged as a powerful state in the heart of Europe. Throughout the nineteenth century, Mennonites tried to find a way to be loyal both to their country and to their faith. It was not an easy task.

National Loyalties and Personal Beliefs

During much of the nineteenth century, many European countries centralized and consolidated their political and economic powers as they created national states. Failure to do so might, as in the case of Poland, prove fatal to the state. As national ambitions, expressed in part through unified and expanded military power, led to the consolidation of the Prussian state, then the formation of the German state, traditional Mennonite adherence to pacifism found itself challenged and undermined.

Frederick William II's seizure of Danzig in 1793 during the second partition of Poland illustrates the spirit of the times. The city had desperately tried to maintain its virtual free-city existence, but efforts to find strong allies were unsuccessful. Gradually, Prussia's economic pressure on the city forced the proud "Queen of the Baltic" to capitulate. Johanna Schopenhauer, mother of the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, expressed the sentiments of at least a segment of the Danzig population when she wrote of the "stranglehold of the Prussians." As she observed the restrictions imposed on the city, she angrily denounced the humiliating searches to which people leaving or entering the city were subjected.[1] Finally, she herself left the city of her birth.

For Mennonites of the city, the seizure of Danzig meant that they too would have to come to terms with the new Prussian state. They had already been paying a military assessment; now the new government re-examined the situation and decreed that Mennonites in Danzig would pay 600 thalers to be exempt from military service. The combined dues imposed on the Mennonites in this region thus totaled 5,600 thalers; Mennonite leaders were responsible for collection of the assessment.[2]

With the accession of Frederick William III in 1797, pressure on Mennonites was intensified. In 1799, Mennonite young men were summoned to a local review board, first to be asked if their parents and grandparents were Mennonites, then to present statements from a local Mennonite el-

der as well as the court verifying that they were members of a Mennonite church.[3] In response to this unusual procedure as well as a growing uneasiness about possible changes being considered by the government, Mennonites leaders decided to contact the authorities to see if the great "Charter of Liberties" was still in effect.[4] The authorities assured them that it was and that the whole matter would be carefully examined. Elder Donner made a specific petition on behalf of nine young men whom he had baptized but who came from mixed marriages, and his request to allow them to remain in the Mennonite Church was granted. At the same time, new problems arose when some members of Werder communities complained that the "rich Mennonites" were economically oppressing impoverished Lutherans.[5] Thus, public pressure became an increasingly important factor in determining policy. And when some Mennonites suggested a reduction of the assessment for the Kulm military academy, the king responded that this could happen only when the extent of Mennonite land holdings would fall below what they held in 1780.

Further restrictions were put in place when a declaration, dated 17 December 1801, stipulated that only sons, not daughters, could inherit the right to military exemption based on land. Such restrictions created a great deal of concern, so a general meeting of representatives from all Mennonite churches in the region was held in Heubuden on 2 March 1802. They decided to hire a legal advisor, who then prepared a brief for the king, contending that Mennonite liberties were being systematically reduced. The government rejected this appeal, saying that the basic rights granted in 1780 were still in effect. The Charter of Liberties had been designed only for the Mennonites and their landholdings at that time. By expanding their land, Mennonites had moved beyond the limits placed by that document and thus could not claim exemption for lands acquired since 1780. Some Mennonites, such as those in the village of Augustwalde in the Little Werder, now chose to accept military service; others said they would rather dispose of their land.[6] At this time, the generous provisions offered to settlers by Tsarina Catherine's *Manifesto* no doubt made emigration more attractive.

Mennonites and the Napoleonic Wars

The pressure to conform to national military practices was intensified when Prussia became involved in the Napoleonic Wars. Mennonite leaders tried to respond in a positive way by pledging to give the king 30,000 thalers; on 23 November 1806, they gave the king 17,000, then proceeded to collect the rest. They expressed their hope that the money would be used to alleviate suffering caused by the war, especially in helping orphans and widows. However, they added, "we leave it to your Royal Majesty's gracious will to determine its disposition."[7]

As the wars continued, the situation in Prussia became increasingly difficult. When the government placed an assessment on farms in the Werder, the Mennonite churches decided to pay an additional voluntary sum of 10,000 thalers to support the king. A grateful king, Frederick William III, declared that Mennonites should now be relieved of earlier land-acquisition restrictions; they should have freedom to buy land just like others.[8] However, new difficulties arose when Napoleon's forces invaded Prussia, and Prussian authorities ordered immediate formation of the militia and summoned all able-bodied men to join it. There was to be no exemption. Mennonite leaders said they would serve as firefighters, medical orderlies, and in other ways help the war effort, but they could not take up arms.

In response, the government said it would accept 25,000 thalers and 500 horses from the Mennonites. Mennonites had difficulty meeting these demands by the set deadline, since in the urgency of the moment they had been given only forty-eight hours to meet their assessments. The more well-to-do Mennonites now extended loans to families unable to meet their share of the payment, and the financial demands were met. When only 300 horses were provided, an additional levy of 14,000 thalers was imposed and paid.[9] These assessments were levied on Mennonites living on the right side of the Vistula; those on the left, under different military jurisdiction, received somewhat different assessments.

Government officials declared this to be a temporary response to an immediate problem. They insisted that the traditional exemption from regular military service had never been designed to cover situations where a public militia would be called into emergency service to defend their homes. Similarly, non-Mennonite members of communities expressed

their vigorous opposition to the idea that anyone should be granted exemption from defensive military action when the enemy was overrunning the homeland.

In addition, Mennonites were required to perform support services such as caring for the cavalry and helping transport supplies and foodstuffs. In cases where there was a delayed response, officials came to get the men and take them to the military base in Graudenz. Mennonite leaders protested that this was a violation of their promised liberties and soon secured the release of the drafted men. A new government decree stipulated that the military exemption could be extended only to persons who were actual members of Mennonite congregations. The churches expressed their gratitude by donating another substantial sum of money as well as a large quantity of canvas to the government.[10]

As the war dragged on, the changing military configurations repeatedly led military commanders to insist that Mennonites be prepared at least to join in the *Landsturm*, the civilian militia designed as a last desperate line of defense. Again, Mennonite leaders appealed to the king, and again the king agreed that the Mennonites should be exempt from bearing arms but decreed that they should make contributions to the military that would be the equivalent of actual personal military service. Local military authorities were empowered to determine what that would be. In consequence of this decision, applications for emigration visas increased dramatically.[11] This in turn led to a temporary prohibition of issuing the required emigration papers; moreover, the government ordered a halt to the collection of monies from the Mennonites. In response, Mennonites voluntarily gathered clothing and funds for the military.

Repeatedly, however, as the military situation changed, becoming increasingly desperate, royal concessions of the past were called into question by local military and civilian leaders. Did exemption from military service also include the emergency service expected from all able-bodied men in a last-ditch defense of the homeland? Mennonite leaders insisted that they believed themselves freed from any form of military service, not just the service in a regular army. Disputes also arose concerning what precisely might be regarded as "comparable" in value to actual personal military service.[12] Increasing numbers of Mennonites considered emigration.[13] Others responded by sending large supplies of food to military hospitals in the region.

Then, in 1814, when the Prussian government introduced universal military service, Mennonites were not specifically mentioned. Gone was the traditional tie between land ownership and military obligation. At almost the same time, Napoleon's escape from Elba brought the resumption of war, and military authorities declared that the changed conditions did not permit military exemption for Mennonites. Mennonites replied that the Charter of Privileges issued by Frederick the Great had stipulated exemption for all time. The king responded that the times had changed, but even so, he would grant a continuation of exemption from regular military service.[14] Some Mennonite men had actually been pressed into service, but they were released when the royal decree was published.[15]

Tensions mounted as the Prussian government continued its drive for a more powerful army. Young men were ordered to register for potential military service. When some Mennonites refused to do so, their fathers were imprisoned but soon released when Mennonite leaders entered vigorous protests. On another occasion, local officials demanded that Mennonites surrender their hunting guns, asserting the necessity of having arms for the militia should its use become necessary.

The years of war in the early nineteenth century, including the desperate situation of the Prussian state and the ravages of occupation by foreign troops, left Mennonites in the Vistula Delta with a legacy from which they never fully recovered. Although they had contributed funds, horses, food, and clothing, their neighbors increasingly insisted that no amount of material help could take the place of having sons serve to protect the homeland. When Mennonites appealed to Scripture, their long observance of a peace tradition, and their confession of faith, their neighbors wrote petitions against exemption from war. Government officials similarly urged the king not to permit any loyalty to take precedence over that owed the state. Few expressed this view so forcefully as did Theodor von Schön, holder of a number of powerful government offices, when, after the war, he warned that the state should not tolerate opinions that held there was a commitment that took precedence over "duty to the fatherland."[16]

Mennonites faced a dilemma. Many of their ministers contended that, if forced to choose between Caesar and God, there could be no question of their commitment. Opponents responded that a Christian owed obedience to the government and made a sharp distinction between personal and social/political ethics. The Mennonite call to place loyalty to God

first was denounced both as misinformed and as escapist. Perhaps even more serious was the division that arose in many congregations as increasing numbers of members and ministers contended that traditional confessional statements, born in a time of persecution, did not adequately address a situation where king and government were widely perceived to be deeply religious and devout. For Mennonites, a wrenching struggle continued: how could one be a faithful believer and a loyal citizen in time of war?[17]

Charting a New Course

As the states of Europe slowly recovered from the Napoleonic Wars, Mennonites found that they could not simply go back to the antebellum status quo. Mennonites in Western Europe, in a number of instances, had accepted regular military service. In West and East Prussia also, the pressures from society and the military policies of the government had scored some success in the Mennonite churches. The most celebrated case involved David von Riesen, a member of the Elbing Mennonite Church who joined the military to fight Napoleon. In consequence, the leaders of the church declared that his action had removed him from the church. Upon his return, he attempted to regain his membership, but the church refused. Von Riesen now appealed to the ministries of justice and of internal affairs; these officials directed the church to receive him back into membership. When the leaders refused to change their position, the government charged violation of state laws. An appeal to the courts resulted in dismissal of charges against the ministers; in addition, the court found that the Mennonite Church had the right to exclude from its membership a person who deliberately broke his commitment to the church by violating one of its teachings.[18] A few other Mennonites in East Prussia who also had taken up arms late in the war were similarly informed that by joining the armed forces they had voluntarily removed themselves from membership in their Mennonite churches.

Elsewhere in Europe, the Napoleonic Wars had made deep inroads. In the Netherlands, at centers such as Zaandam, a number of Mennonites joined the military to defend their homes; some became officers. Although the large congregation in Amsterdam opposed such practices, the question remained unresolved. As the pressures of war mounted and the Nether-

lands came under French rule, Mennonites there lost the traditional privilege of military exemption. After the war, the Dutch Mennonites did not return to a uniform practice of refusing military service, and pacifism was dropped from their confession of faith.[19] Similarly, most Mennonite congregations in other parts of the western German states, such as those along the Rhine, no longer insisted on a pacifist position after the Napoleonic Wars.[20]

At the same time, it must be noted that the traditional pacifist position stirred considerable unease in Mennonite congregations in the Vistula Delta and beyond. In his *Monatsschrift* in May 1848, Pastor Carl Harder emphatically distanced himself from the historic Mennonite teaching. He wrote, "According to the Bible the use of weapons is necessary if order, quiet, justice can be maintained in no other way. . . . Our fathers were right when they in their situation rejected all use of weapons because at that time, weapons were almost always misused."[21] Harder emphasized that conditions in Prussia were shaped by earnest pursuit of justice for the state and members of society and thus were totally different from the rapacious wars and injustices of an earlier time.

The Frankfurt Parliament, Prussian Parliament, and Mennonite Pacifism

In 1848, when a wave of revolutionary movements swept over much of Europe, the Frankfurt "Parliament" attempted to lay a constitutional basis for the creation of a unified German nation. This was an assembly drawn from the parliaments of the various German states. Many of the assembled leaders agreed that the leading role should be played by Prussia and its king should become head of the projected new nation. Others championed an enlarged German state that would not only include Austria but be led by the Austrian emperor. That position did not become dominant.

There was strong support for the view that the new state should be shaped by democratic and liberal ideals and that power should be shared between crown and parliament. In the ensuing debates, Hermann von Beckerath, a member of the Krefeld Mennonite Church, emerged as one the most eloquent and respected leaders. Some of his central themes were equality before the law, freedom of conscience, and freedom of the press. Earlier, as a member of the *Landtag* (legislative assembly) of the Rhineland,

he had become a strong champion of equal rights for Jewish members of society and had argued that a land dominated by Christian principles could learn much from ancient Jewish beliefs. The emancipation of Jews in the Rhineland was long overdue, he argued.[22] Now, in Frankfurt, von Beckerath championed political freedom and equality without special privileges for anyone.[23]

As the debates continued, political leaders from a broad spectrum tried to envision, then shape, a future Germany. They chose von Beckerath as minister of finance in the cabinet being formed to head what was hoped would become the new German government. When the issue of national security was discussed, the question of military exemption of Mennonites came to the floor. Von Beckerath, already known as a champion of civil liberties and equality irrespective of religious beliefs, argued that Mennonites and other persons not part of established religions should be equal before the law. They should enjoy the same rights and responsibilities as other citizens but should not ask for any special privileges. Mennonites should be willing to give up their exemption from compulsory military service and be proud to be viewed as equals in rights and responsibilities. Von Beckerath noted that in earlier times there had been no universal military conscription, so the exemption granted Mennonites had not appeared so unusual. Now, however, "since a free state is to be established, a state whose very authority rests upon the equality in rights and duties of all citizens, such a special favor can have no justification."[24] This vigorous rejection of military exemption was met with enthusiastic applause.[25]

As von Beckerath expanded on his egalitarian views, he soon found opponents. Although he was an accomplished orator and emerged as a dominant voice of the liberal faction in the parliament, when von Beckerath led the drive for sharing power between the crown and parliament, he found the king did not welcome these democratic sentiments. King Frederick William IV responded that he would never allow himself to become a "tool of the parliamentary majority." He declared that "authority," not "majority," would be the guiding principle.[26] The struggle for a constitutional monarchy continued, but increasingly, champions of the old guard, led by Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, defended the existing authoritarian rule of the monarch and his advisors. One of the members of the conservative alliance sneered that von Beckerath's position would give full civil rights to "heathen, Mohammedans, worshippers of the sun, moon and stars, as

well as worshippers of the goddess wisdom."[27] After vigorous debate, and determined intervention by the king, the old "alliance between throne and altar"[28] carried the day. Political equality and constitutional monarchy would have to wait.

Responses from Mennonites along the Vistula

Most Mennonite churches in the Vistula Delta immediately expressed their strong disagreement with von Beckerath. Contending that the majority of Mennonites still held to pacifism, Mennonite leaders responded that their rejection of military service did not arise from the good or evil intentions and actions of government; rather, this was an expression of their understanding of the teachings of Christ.[29] Some government officials suggested a modification of the traditional position by limiting such service to the militia, which would be called into action only in times of utmost emergency. This too was rejected by Mennonite leaders, for they insisted that exemption from military service had been granted in perpetuity and could not be abrogated by new laws. No ruler could change the commandments of Christ. Once again, the government declared that further Mennonite acquisition of land would be prohibited if military obligations were rejected. Individual Mennonites, of course, were free to accept military obligations and thus not be restricted by the long-established policies for retaining military exemption. It was clear, however, that Mennonites in Prussia, as well as in other states, no longer spoke with a unified voice in this matter.

With the increasingly important role played by representatives of the general populace, initiatives to address Mennonite exemption began to originate from among the elected deputies, not only from government officials. Thus, in 1859 a deputy in the lower house in Prussia introduced a measure to impose compulsory military service on Mennonites and to free them from the special assessments they paid as well as from any land acquisition restrictions. The upper house seemed favorably inclined and awaited a response from government ministries. Mennonite leaders in the delta presented another protest to Frederick William IV, asserting that (1) pacifism was a basic belief of Mennonites since the Reformation and was the product, not of external factors, but rather of their understanding of the teachings of Scripture; (2) the right to practice this tenet of their faith

had been granted formally by a long succession of rulers; and (3) a modification of the centuries-old practice, unless arrived at through discussion and mutual consent, would be a violation of the very spirit of freedom and justice on which the emerging state of Prussia prided itself.[30] If, despite these concerns, the government should abrogate the military exemption, Mennonite leaders declared that the members of their churches would consider emigration.[31]

Although this resolution was adopted by a majority of Mennonite churches, the Danzig church felt a more conciliatory stance should be taken. Nonetheless, elders from several churches were appointed to take the resolution to the government in Berlin. Several government ministers received them cordially, and the king himself granted them an audience. The king informed them of his good will but also stated that he was bound by the constitution and was not free to make arbitrary exemptions. Another minister told the Mennonites that the modern egalitarian state had no room for privileged exemptions.[32]

When the elders returned, another meeting was called to plan further action. Wilhelm Mannhardt, professor at the University of Berlin, was retained to draft a formal statement of the basis and history of Mennonite beliefs on pacifism. When this study was completed, a group of Mennonite leaders met and approved what had been written. At the same time, a general meeting of Mennonites was called to review the document. After some changes and deletions were made, the document was published as *Die Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten*.

It was at this time that a power struggle between the king and the Reichstag (Parliament) led to the dissolution of the latter. New elections were called, and for the first time Mennonites in the Vistula Delta became directly involved in the campaign. A prominent Mennonite and merchant, Kommerzienrat (business counselor) Warkentin,[33] ran as a candidate of the Liberal Party, which was widely perceived as the champion of more widely shared governmental power. He lost to the Conservative candidate, who gained strong backing from Mennonite leaders. Apparently, many Mennonites believed that they would fare better with a strong king than they would under a more democratic political system. Subsequent developments were to show that forces of nationalism, militarism, and centralized authoritarianism were the real arbiters of power.

Centralized Authority and Militarism Confront Pacifism

Prussia's wars in the 1860s placed Mennonites under increased tension. First the war between Prussia and Denmark in 1864 and then the war with Austria in 1866 sharply challenged Mennonite privilege. Chancellor Otto von Bismarck presented draft legislation to make military service universal but allowed for Mennonite and Quaker exemptions. The parliament, however, struck down these exemptions. The year 1867 set the stage for intense Mennonite soul-searching. King and Bundestag agreed: Mennonite exemption from military obligations should be ended. On 3 March 1867, the king issued an order-in-cabinet stipulating that the exemption of Mennonites from military service was now terminated; however, those who would not voluntarily bear arms could meet their obligations by serving as medical orderlies in military hospitals, as secretaries, as deliverers of supplies, or in other tasks not requiring combat.[34]

Mennonites were in a quandary. What should be done? Von Brauchitsch, the parliamentary representative from the Elbing-Marienburg area who had been elected with Mennonite support, now advised Mennonite leaders to send delegates to Berlin to try to address this matter. A delegation of five elders traveled to Berlin to request that the king grant Mennonites exemption from military service.[35] Minister of War von Roon received them cordially and said he would do what he could; he urged them to consider serving as medics. Von Roon asked the elders if they thought military persons, such as he, could be included among God's redeemed. One of the elders responded with an illustration from Paul's writings to the Corinthians, noting that Paul had recognized that responses might well be different, depending on one's conscience and understanding. Von Roon responded, "So you would allow someone like me to enter heaven?" When they responded, "Most certainly," he replied, "Then I am satisfied."[36] Von Roon said he would try to help, but he was not in control of this situation.

On the following day, the delegates listened to some of the debates in the Reichstag but were not able to see Chancellor von Bismarck before they began their journey home. They later learned that Bismarck did not wish the law adopted by the Reichstag to be changed; instead, he had pushed it through the Bundesrat (upper house) as well.

In February 1868, von Brauchitsch suggested a Mennonite delegation

again go to Berlin, so the elders returned. They were able to meet with a number of cabinet ministers and other leaders, including the president of the Bundesrat, Count Stollberg. Several times, they were urged to consider allowing their young men to serve as medics in the army. Eventually, the elders were also granted an audience with the king, now Wilhelm I, the later kaiser. When the elders explained their predicament to the king, he responded that he had no intention of violating someone's conscience. He hoped that a way could be found for Mennonites to be willing to accept a compromise that would not require them to engage in combat. After a cordial discussion, the elders were dismissed in a friendly manner.

On the following day, the elders were granted an audience with the crown prince, who later briefly ruled as Frederick III. When the elders requested that the crown prince find a way that would provide for military exemption, he responded that he had no such power. The laws stood above the king, not the other way around. One of the elders then requested that, should no solution be found, Mennonites be granted a time of adjustment. When the crown prince asked why this would be helpful, he was told that if the law would be enforced as written, Mennonites wanted time to prepare to emigrate.[37] When asked where they might go, the elders said that Russia was a possibility. The crown prince dryly remarked that, should Mennonites move to Russia, they might be well advised to have alternative plans, for Russia would soon, no doubt, also impose compulsory military service.[38]

In further discussion, the elders suggested that they would be happy to provide care for wounded soldiers and would also be willing to pay extra assessments in lieu of military service. The crown prince indicated this might be a suitable alternative. He stated that he, as well as the whole royal house, would do what they could to respect the Mennonite conscience. Soon thereafter, the Mennonite delegation returned home, hopeful that a solution would be found.

After members of the delegation returned, they learned that no accommodation to their requests had been made. The law stood as it had been passed. A written petition was now sent to the king and to the government, once again requesting a modification which would grant Mennonites "Anerkennung ihrer Glaubensfreiheit" (freedom of faith).[39] This time there was no response, even though von Brauchitsch himself sent a personal note of support.

Church leaders waited for more than a month, but when no response came, Mennonite elders in the region held a general meeting and again decided to send petitions to Chancellor von Bismarck and Minister of War von Roon. Again the elders offered to take care of sick and wounded soldiers, but in their communities, not under military control. The Mennonite Church in Danzig declined to support this position but recommended that young men volunteer to serve as medics as well as to perform various support services that did not require the bearing of arms. Once again, the petitions failed to elicit any positive response.

Mennonite leaders called another meeting and decided to send a letter directly to the crown prince. When no response was received, they met and drew up a petition for presentation to the upper house, the Bundesrat. The five elders once again made the journey and were again granted audiences by the king and the crown prince. Despite cordial receptions, the delegation received no assurances that the law would be changed. Suggestions that Mennonites would emigrate also elicited no positive response.

The long struggle over the right to military exemption had not brought the Mennonites the kind of action the elders had requested. In addition, the Mennonite community was clearly not of one mind in this matter. At the same time, the new regulations were elastic enough to convince many that the government had offered a reasonable compromise. Most Mennonites felt they could live with the new law. Some expressed their readiness to accept military service; others, a decided minority, decided to emigrate. The elders Penner, Wiebe, and Toews were leaders of the latter group. Those who chose emigration formally petitioned the government to grant them a period of twenty years to allow them to dispose of their possessions in an orderly manner in preparation for emigration to another country. That petition went unanswered. Another petition, thanking the king for having provided for alternative service, received 450 signatures and clearly represented the majority view.[40]

For some, however, the alternative presented had not been adequate. Elder Wiebe resigned his position and emigrated to Russia. In Heubuden, Elder Penner briefly maintained his position and rejected participation in the options proposed by the government. His church became sharply divided on the issue, and from fall 1874 until summer 1876 did not celebrate communion. In 1877, after a divisive struggle, Penner left for Amer-

ica, along with most of the church's other ministers and a number of members.

The large majority of Mennonites who remained in Prussia came to terms with the new conditions and shared sentiments earlier expressed in a resolution adopted unanimously by the Danzig Church on 2 October 1870:

> While we agree with our ancestors that all war arises because of sin and is a great evil, and that it is our obligation to live according to the love and peace of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to express these beliefs in our life as a church, we nonetheless find it difficult to conclude from the statements of Scripture that it is always wrong for all members of society to support a state's demand for military service.
>
> Accordingly we decline to issue an obligatory and binding command prohibiting all participation in military service. In altering our traditional understanding of this belief, we are united in allowing each of our brothers to have free choice in deciding how and in what manner they will meet the demands of the state and at the same time, satisfy their consciences before God. At the same time, we affirm that it is our conviction that the most fitting way to meet these demands is through service in transporting supplies, providing medical assistance, working in offices or in strengthening economic production.[41]

The statement went on to declare that everyone should be free to choose the manner in which to serve the state. Each person should make a conscientious decision according to one's understanding of what God required. Members of the church were urged to prefer service in positions where they would not have to fight and where they could perform practical acts of healing and helping. In addition, the church also adopted a position allowing members from other confessions to participate in communion, join the church, and intermarry with members of the Mennonite Church.

A revised confession of faith, issued in 1895 by the "Mennonites of Prussia," formally acknowledged that they no longer regarded the historic peace position a necessary part of Mennonite belief. Emphasis was placed on the right and the freedom of the individual to choose how to respond to the nation that demanded military service. In addition, each person was

exhorted to "do all that was possible"[42] to live in peace. Earlier confessions, such as the one printed in 1860, still stated that "we may not use the sword or other weapons against our enemies."[43] A similar view had been expressed in the confession of 1836[44] as well as in previous confessional statements going back to the Reformation.

Thus, after more than a century of meetings and discussions in churches, debates among church leaders, petitions to government officials, and consideration of possible alternatives, the Mennonites in the Vistula Delta concluded that the progressive and enlightened times, far removed from the tyranny and persecution of earlier days, made service to the state, even in the military, an acceptable and conscientious response. Some Mennonites explained the change as a recognition that "God's kingdom" could not be created by human, idealistic methods.[45]

Pacifism in a "Progressive and Enlightened" Society

The extent of this transformation became apparent during World War I. On 3 March 1915, the venerable community leader, Pastor H. G. Mannhardt of the Danzig Mennonite Church, addressed a public gathering in support of Germany's war effort. His stature was such that a predominantly Lutheran city had invited him to speak for the whole community. His speech, entitled "Deeds and Heroes," preceded by arias and choruses from the first part of Handel's *Judas Maccabaeus*, quickly drew a parallel between the Maccabean struggle for liberty and the current war. Germany, Mannhardt declared, was desperately trying to save freedom and the fatherland from the unjust hostility of other countries. The Danzig pastor now lent his support to the deliberate demonization of the enemy, whom he described as "oppressors" and "liars" whose "envy and hatred" had led to a "destructive rage" now directed against a land that championed righteousness. Mannhardt went on to assure his listeners that God would stand by Germany as she fought for justice and liberty. Citing a central biblical virtue, Mannhardt declared, "Righteousness exalts a nation." He left no doubt that this divine approbation applied to Germany as she fought for the noble causes of human dignity and freedom. "Germany, you heart of the world, there is so much for which we must thank you!" he declared, calling on his hearers to be ready to fight and die for the fatherland.[46]

Elsewhere, opponents, equally devout, were just as confident that theirs was the cause that enjoyed divine favor. Mennonites who had gone to Russia to find a new home and fewer restrictions than they faced in Prussia now found that political leaders in their new homeland similarly called on the countrymen to do battle for God and country. Only a few months earlier a rousing call for support of the ruler had taken place before a large crowd in the Lutheran Church of St. Peter in St. Petersburg. But this time the godly ruler whose just and noble cause would surely have divine blessing was Tsar Nicholas II.[47] A casual visitor might well have wondered how each side could be so sure that its ruler was the one God would bless and to whom God would grant victory. In both instances, faithful citizens, including Mennonites, were called upon to help their nation gain the victory.

A decade later, when the smoke of war had cleared, the centuries-old Mennonite teaching on pacifism found a new champion. In 1925, on the occasion of the celebration of the four-hundredth anniversary of the beginning of the Anabaptist-Mennonite movement, Emil Händiges, pastor of the Mennonite Church in Elbing-Ellerwald, praised the early Mennonites for their rejection of war and their constructive role in emphasizing freedom of conscience, freedom of the church from domination by the state, and the prominent role of the laity in the life of the church.[48] It is worth noting that Händiges showed an awareness of the strong peace movements gaining support in Europe and North America at that time. And yet, when World War II began, it quickly became evident that most Mennonites in Prussia, as in the rest of Germany, were not committed to the traditional Mennonite understanding of peace and reconciliation. Once again feelings of nationalism, the perceived righteous stance of the state, and a pro-state interpretation of the biblical call to be "subordinate to the powers" proved strong enough to overpower lingering beliefs in pacifism. For many Mennonites the demands of Caesar and of God need not be regarded as being contradictory.

Epilogue

The changing religious climate and new political realities in a number of European states in early nineteenth-century Europe posed challenges of accommodation for many Mennonites. In some instances, the peace position, which had been maintained since the sixteenth century, was now modified by Mennonite ministers and other leaders to permit young men to serve in the military forces. At the same time, many Mennonites living in the Vistula Delta and further up the river were reluctant to accept this doctrinal adaptation but were also uneasy about leaving a society where they had become well established.

For decades, Mennonites debated the validity and importance of the traditional rejection of service in the military. The question became sharply focused when Prussian authorities insisted that no further land acquisitions would be permitted by those who refused military service. At the same time, large families created strong pressure for more land, and a number of Mennonites decided to seek homes in New Russia, an area recently captured from the Turks. Soon new colonies emerged in areas north of the Black Sea and elsewhere.

In early modern times, the Polish Commonwealth was one of a few regions in Europe that offered a large measure of religious and economic freedom. For two and a half centuries, the Polish crown as well as numerous civic and religious powers allowed Mennonites to shape their own world. Then, in the latter part of the eighteenth century when Poland was

divided among Austria, Prussia, and Russia, new factors began to impinge upon the traditional Mennonite way of life. Forces of militarism, acculturation, political centralization, and a perception that the Prussian government was led by devout and God-fearing persons created challenges for Mennonite belief and practice. In earlier times, Polish authorities had respected Mennonite beliefs and permitted them to be exempt from military service. The new Prussian order, however, challenged traditional Mennonite values and at the same time insisted that it did so in a manner fully compatible with Christian belief.

A New Frontier

Just a few years before the dismemberment of Poland, Tsarina Catherine of Russia had issued an invitation for new settlers to come to her realm. Her proclamation of 1763 offered free land and generous support to those who chose to accept this opportunity.[1] Leaders of the Mennonite communities in what was now called West Prussia sent emissaries to check out settlement possibilities. Reports were positive, and by 1789 a substantial number of emigrants from Prussia had settled near the Black Sea in the vicinity of Khortitsa. Mennonite emigration to "New Russia," today's Ukraine, was under way.

Meanwhile, the unexpected exodus from Prussia caused concern among local officials. Although some government authorities spoke disparagingly of those who were leaving, others advocated policies that would prevent this loss of productive members of society. In numerous instances, local officials who were concerned about economic consequences used a variety of obstructionist tactics to prevent farmers, artisans, businesspersons, and laborers from leaving. Local officials warned the Berlin government that many parts of East and West Prussia needed more, not fewer, settlers and suggested that the central government devise policies that would encourage the inhabitants to forget about emigration.

Uncertainty and confusion were perhaps not unusual in view of the dramatic changes that had occurred in the latter decades of the century. Relatively tolerant and relaxed policies of Polish authorities had given way to a more centralized administration. Creation of a stronger military force was a high priority of the new Prussian government. Furthermore, Mennonite leaders who journeyed to Berlin quickly discovered that rea-

sons of state took precedence over their beliefs.[2] One of the emissaries, Heinrich Donner of Orlofferfelde warned that lack of a positive Prussian government response might well convince Mennonites to accept the invitation to move to Russia,[3] yet when the administrative centers of East and West Prussia, Königsberg, and Marienwerder respectively, evidently did not successfully implement policies that met demands of the central government in Berlin, the frustration in the capital was clearly evident in a blunt reprimand sent from Berlin to the West Prussian government on 6 March 1788: "We cannot understand how the West Prussian government could come to a position where it is offering these Mennonites hope of freedom to emigrate. In our opinion, if they are granted permission, there will soon be a large group of others desiring to emigrate. This could be very detrimental to the population."[4] Clearly, Berlin had not yet formulated a comprehensive response to the Mennonite dilemma. The indecisive directive continued: "Perhaps some ways could be found to calm the Mennonites and give them a means of earning their bread, or even greater freedom to acquire land."[5]

The government in Berlin continued to urge East and West Prussian authorities to find a way to prevent the expected growth of emigration numbers. At the same time, it insisted that military considerations would continue to remain paramount. On 10 May1788, for example, the Department of External Affairs in Berlin issued a clarifying memorandum to West Prussian authorities. While emigration was to be discouraged, limited permission to emigrate could be granted, for "our state . . . needs citizens and inhabitants who will, if necessary, defend their state and serve as soldiers, which according to their principles Mennonites reject."[6] Moreover, the concession seemed less threatening than had earlier been thought, for the would-be emigrants were reported to be persons who did not own land; military obligations would thus not be affected. Mennonite leaders, however, again visited Berlin and urged that any Mennonite should be free to emigrate, since the government made no concession about acquisition of land.[7] Berlin responded that those Mennonites who did not possess land were free to emigrate; at the same time, Mennonite ministers were directed to warn their parishioners not to emigrate to Russia without contacting local authorities. Donner noted in his *Chronik* that Mennonites paid little attention to this directive. Many of them avoided Prussian authorities by moving to Danzig, which until 1793 remained

under the Polish crown. They then obtained permission to emigrate from city authorities.[8]

Despite the apparent emigration concession to Mennonites without land holdings, the government seemed unable to provide clear guidelines. On 2 August 1788, a report from Königsberg, East Prussia's capital, showed that all emigration was subject to careful scrutiny. In another communication, Berlin authorities asked the Königsberg government for recommendations on how Mennonite emigration might best be prevented. Berlin noted that loss of population, reduction of productivity, and loss of consumption could not be easily dismissed. Similarly, if the emigrants took possessions along, these would be lost to Prussia.[9] Temporary solutions were adopted while various government agencies attempted to develop a satisfactory policy. Thus, one directive from Berlin to East Prussian authorities stipulated that, at least for the present, persons applying for emigration permission were to be denied the necessary documents. Instead, officials were to initiate delaying tactics such as determining the financial status of the applicant and alerting authorities so that clandestine emigration would be prevented.[10]

Sometimes questions of administrative jurisdiction complicated emigration. One contingent of Mennonite families, coming from Danzig and headed for Russia, consisted of 26 families. The group was carefully checked by Prussian authorities even though Danzig was not yet under Prussian rule.[11] An official discovered that four Mennonite families, part of the entourage, had left Prussian territory two years earlier and settled in Danzig. Should this be regarded as an attempt to evade Prussian rule? Local authorities examined the situation, then decided to let the emigration proceed, although records show the decision was not unanimous.[12] A review of another group of emigrants revealed that one of them was "a subject of the [Prussian] king," and he was arrested and prevented from emigrating.

Various techniques used to slow or prevent emigration had proved ineffective. When a review established that some four hundred persons had already emigrated, local authorities recommended a change of strategy. The Königsberg government suggested that, since so many Mennonites were emigrating and lost to the Prussian state, they should be allowed to stay even if they retained their position on military matters. The economic advantages would be far greater than any possible loss to the military ranks

should the Mennonites stay. Concessions should be made so the emigration would stop.[13] Almost in desperation, the East Prussian authorities decided to develop policies that might meet Mennonite concerns.

In a report to the Berlin central administration, Königsberg officials noted that East Prussia badly needed more settlers. Since many areas were only sparsely settled, Mennonites could well serve as "model farmers" for the underdeveloped regions.[14] Furthermore, efforts should be made to halt the recruiting activities of Russian emissaries and stop their advertising campaign. Another suggestion was to work with the Danzig government to develop a joint policy to stop the granting of exit visas. Clandestine emigration from Prussia was also to be halted. Meanwhile, Berlin outlined a somewhat different approach. In a memorandum dated 6 September 1788, the Berlin authorities had urged Mennonite elders "not to approve the leaving of any Mennonite who does not have a visa . . . issued by the government office."[15]

In 1793 the political scene changed again. On January 23, Prussia and Russia signed an accord whereby the Second Partition gave Danzig to Prussia. Despite a short military skirmish in which the Danzig forces resisted the Prussian takeover, Frederick William quickly prevailed. The city's virtually independent status, which had allowed emigrating Mennonites a loophole to escape the effects of Prussian regulations, was ended. Despite the city council's expressed willingness to accept the new king, he terminated Danzig's governmental and juridical systems, and the city came under the control of the Prussian crown.

This political change, soon followed by the Third Partition of Poland, effectively ended the use of any Polish loophole for emigration. Nonetheless, emigration continued, while Mennonite leaders tried to gain liberalization of the existing regulations governing military exemption. These efforts sometimes proved successful, as when Heinrich Donner asked for military exemption for sons born to a Lutheran-Mennonite marriage and his request was granted.[16] This was all the more remarkable since earlier government directives had decreed that children born of such a mixed marriage should be reared in the faith of the non-Mennonite partner. The relative laxity of the government in permitting exceptions to published regulations helped convince many Mennonites that emigration was not the only option for those wishing to retain their traditional views.

Enforcement of government policy was often dependent on local officials rather than on the letter of the law. A government directive dated 1 December 1801 stipulated that the total acreage of those granted military exemption should not exceed that held in 1780, yet in the next two decades, Mennonites continued to acquire land.[17] Clearly, a time of adjustment and negotiation lay ahead. Some Mennonite leaders feared that if the government remained adamant, many Mennonites would choose military service.[18] For those who had no desire to emigrate, the military option became increasingly acceptable. But for many others, the preferred response was emigration to Russia or elsewhere. The result was that in the early decades of the nineteenth century another colony was established in New Russia. This settlement, Molochna, would become the largest Mennonite colony. Gradually, the population of Mennonites in Russia came to equal and then exceed the total number of those who remained in Prussia.

Once again, as in the sixteenth century, some Mennonites had found a solution to a pressing problem by emigrating to a region that offered new concessions and freedoms. Whether the opportunities in New Russia would equal or surpass those in Prussia remained an open question. Only time would allow the new immigrants to make comparative evaluations of the rights and privileges granted by a Prussian king and by a Russian tsar. One factor seemed well established. The bonds of faith would remain vital. Just as Mennonite emigrants to Royal Prussia in the sixteenth century maintained close ties with their fellow believers in the Netherlands and elsewhere, so also the emigrants to Russia were determined to maintain close ties with the homeland they had left behind.

For those Mennonites who remained in Prussia, the claims of the state and the dominant culture became ever stronger. On the one hand, Mennonites enjoyed a large measure of acceptance, so that the relationship between Lutherans and Mennonites was "the best that could be imagined." From another perspective, an observer wrote that Mennonites in Prussia seemed to know "almost nothing of Menno Simons" except that he rejected infant baptism and the swearing of an oath.[19] In the new Prussia, as in other countries where Mennonites found a home, the quest for a balance between a church's long-held values and beliefs, and the increasingly pervasive demands of the state presented challenges that could not

be ignored. For many, a "godly" state had made obedience appropriate and right; for others, emigration seemed the correct response if their traditional faith was to be maintained.

No one could foresee that for a time those Mennonites who remained in Prussia, and, later, Germany, would achieve a remarkable degree of prosperity and expansion or that in the tragedies of World War II, Mennonites there would again become the dispossessed and the homeless. Nor could anyone dream that the prosperous Mennonites communities in Russia would eventually be destroyed in war, revolution, religious persecution, and famine. Nor could it have been foretold that Mennonites in the Vistula Delta and beyond, as well as their brothers and sisters in the later Soviet Union, would once again emigrate. Like their common ancestors of the sixteenth century, they would seek hope, homes, peace, and religious freedom. It was indeed a remarkable recycling of centuries.

APPENDIX 1

Selected Documents Concerning Religious Liberty

I. Royal Decrees

A. Władysław IV, 1642

We, Władysław IV, By the grace of God, King of Poland, Grand Duke in Lithuania, Russia, Prussia, Mazovia, Samogitia, Livonia, Smolensk, . . . Declare, with this our decree, to all whom it may concern. It is fitting that all diligence and effort, made on behalf of the common good, be given royal grace and protection, and we are well aware of the manner in which the Mennonite ancestors of the inhabitants of the Marienburg islands [Werder], both large and small, were invited here by the Loitzes with the approval and knowledge of our gracious ancestor and grandfather Sigismund Augustus, and were given certain freedoms, rights and privileges, and settled on areas that were barren, swampy and unusable lands in these Werders. With great effort and at very high cost they made these lands fertile and productive. They cleared out the brush, and in order to drain the water from these flooded and marshy lands, they built water mills and constructed dams to guard against flooding by the Vistula, Nogat, Drausen, Haff and Tiege and other streams, and thus made these lands useful and fertile, thus giving their descendants an example of remarkable diligence, work and expenditures. At the humble request of the aforementioned inhabitants of the Marienburg Werder, we confirm, by virtue of our royal authority, every and all rights, privileges and freedoms granted by the gracious Sigismund Augustus, our grandfather, and confirmed by the gracious Stephen Sigismund III, our royal predecessor, and which were regularly observed by these inhabitants in the past. Nothing is excepted, all rights, freedoms and customs which they have used in the past are approved, retained and protected by this our present decree. We wish to maintain and affirm them in full force.

Since they, as faithful subjects, have in the past shown their obedience by giving us certain sums of money, we confirm reception of these funds by means of this decree, but also promise, for us and our gracious successors, that these mentioned inhabitants of both Marienburg Werders, shall be freed from these taxes in the future and for ever. We are determined not to permit anyone to make such taxation demands. To attest to the above, we have personally signed this decree, and confirmed this with the royal seal.

Warsaw, 22 December 1642, in the 10th year of our Polish
and the 11th year of our Swedish reign.
Władysław, King
(Translated by the author)

B. John II Casimir, 1650

We, John Casimir, by the grace of God, King of Poland, Grand Duke of Lithuania, . . . declare, with this present decree, to all whom it may concern, that supplication has been made to us in the name of the Hollanders in Tiegenhof, Bärwalde and all other subjects in our *ekonomia*, that we take them into our royal protection, so they may not be subjected to unusual and extraordinary forced contributions, as has occurred with several persons. In particular, the nobleman Willibald Haxberg, not only in the past year, but also this year has caused great distress by issuing a requisition demanding that two florins shall be paid for each farmyard (even though they had been freed from such assessments by the gracious Władysław IV, our beloved royal brother. . . . When we graciously consider this supplication, which is fully justified, in light of the indefatigable industry which the Mennonites have demonstrated for many years, in bringing the unproductive lands in the previously mentioned Marienburg *ekonomia* into productivity, we want them to experience our royal grace. We terminate and annul all citations and general letters, whatever the appearance and pretense under which they were issued, whether by us or our illustrious predecessors because of evil reports . . . and issued because of allegations about the Mennonite religion, or under any other pretense in order to extort money, we now declare them freed from the assessment of 2 florins on each *Hube*, and affirm them in the possession of their lands, their rights, privileges and freedoms, and all customary practices. Those who act contrary to these privileges shall be punished severely.

To confirm this we have personally signed this decree and affixed the royal seal.

Given in Warsaw, on the 16th day of June in the year 1650 in
the second year of our Polish and our Swedish reign.
Casimir, King
(Translated by the author)

C. John II Casimir, 1660

Ten years later, King Casimir issued another similar decree in defense of the Mennonites, but this time he also warned that Mennonites should not be regarded as Arians.

We, John Casimir, by the grace of God, King of Poland, Grand Duke of Lithuania. . . . It is our intention to prevent the threatened losses, which the mischief of some private persons threatens to bring to our possessions in the *ekonomias* of Tiegenhof and Bärwalde, and the losses in income we would sustain from the lands primarily held by persons of the Mennonite faith, and since it is our wish to thwart the efforts of those who claim to be working for the common good when they attempt to introduce a novel legal interpretation by trying to take old laws against the Arians and now apply them against the Mennonites. Such action could result in the severest depopulation and bring a drastic reduction in our income. This would cause great disadvantage and unacceptable consequences; instead, it is our intention to see to it that our subjects in Tiegenhof shall remain harmless, and have our protection, as well as our royal good will, which is granted through this royal decree. . . . Through this, our previously forwarded declaration, we terminate and annul all those privileges which have arisen privately or in consequence of unfavorable reports about Mennonites, without our approval, irrespective of who has done this or of whatever class or honorable position. . . . We declare that these statements shall have no power and authority, and should contrary charters be issued, . . .we desire that they shall be null and void, and be held as such. . . . No prescriptions issued against the Arians shall be construed as having any bearing on the Mennonites in Tiegenhof. On behalf of ourselves and our gracious successors, so that our subjects and Mennonites in Tiegenhof and their descendants shall have the full benefit of this decree, and that our gracious successors will retain these privileges, We issue this as notice to all officials, whether in the palatinate, land, castle or city offices of the Prussian lands, as well as in other regions of the kingdom. We order that the mentioned Mennonites shall be afforded the protection stipulated in this decree, and that they shall be given full security, as we have outlined in our special rescript, given in Warsaw on the 16th November 1660.

In attestation of this we have signed this letter with our own hand and have affixed the royal seal.

Given in Krakow on 20 November 1660 in the 12th year of
our Polish, the 13th year of our Swedish reign
John Casimir, King
(Translated by the author)

D. John III Sobieski

We, John III, by the grace of God, King of Poland, Grand Duke of Lithuania. . . . We have been informed, on behalf of both Werders in our Marienburg Royal Domain, that the poor subjects have to make payments to the soldiers, even though the lands are exempted from, and should be free, from such burdens and soldiers' levies. We urge and direct that no one, after having seen this proclamation, shall dare to make demands, or quarter troops, make rest stops, demand horses and wagons, food or any financial support under any pretense and thus create difficulties and arouse anger among these people. Failure to observe this will bring condemnation and punishment for the smallest complaint, and require generous restitution.

To attest to the authenticity of this document, we have signed this with our own hand and affixed the royal seal,

Warsaw, 22 August 1695
John, King
(Translated by the author)

E. Augustus II

We, Augustus II, by the grace of God King of Poland, Grand Duke of Lithuania, . . . with this our letter, declare to all and everyone concerned. At our happy accession to the throne in Krakow on 20 September 1697, we confirmed and strengthened for the Mennonites, whom our gracious predecessors had called from Holland, all the rights, privileges, and exemption from public responsibilities which had been granted them. With great effort and industry, they have transformed the Marienburg Werders into productive farmlands and pastures, and have built water mills, which have continued to be of great service to the public, and have brought and continue to bring great benefit to our *ekonomias*. It is our intent, not only to confirm these privileges granted by our illustrious predecessors, but also to affirm the spiritual concessions, commissions and ordinances which have been granted by [Catholic] ordinaries on location, especially by the highly honored Fathers in Christ, Casimir John Opalinski, Cardinal Michael Radziejowski, Theodor Potocki, Felix Ignaz Kretkowski, and most recently the highly honored Father in Christ, Czapski, Bishop of Kulm. These privileges extend to the free exercise of their religion and the customary veneration of God in their private homes, schools, and other places, the observance of baptism and the Lord's Supper, performance of marriages, burial of the dead, including children and non-baptized infants, in church cemeteries, instruction of children through their own teachers in a commonly used place or in separate school buildings, as well as other spiritual activities, which have been granted them.

We confirm all these privileges, both secular and spiritual, for the Mennonites remaining in Prussia. They are not to be disturbed in their free exercise of these privileges, such as in the observance of their religion, free burial of the dead, including minors, instruction of their children through their own teachers in places chosen by them, and all reckless persecution as well as inappropriate and forbidden prejudicial action on the part of private citizens is forbidden, and subject to the prescribed penalties. We are making this known to all whom it may concern, and especially the high governors and castellans of the Prussian lands, as well as the noble . . . administrators and deputy administrators and other officials of our Marienburg *ekonomia*, so that they may take necessary action to preserve the mentioned rights, privileges and freedoms granted both in the temporal and spiritual realm . . . without detriment to our royal authority, the rights of the republic, or of the Roman Catholic Church.

In attestation of the authenticity of this decree, we have personally signed the document and had the royal seal affixed hereto.

Given in Warsaw, 18 October 1732, in the
36th year of our reign.
(Translated by the author)

II. The Sejm of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth

The Confederation of Warsaw, 1573

In January 1573, the Sejm, comprising the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, meeting in Warsaw and noting the religious strife occurring in other parts of Europe, adopted a sweeping declaration of religious toleration. This body, known as the "Confederation of Warsaw," unitedly issued the following statement. Subsequently, all Polish kings had to take an oath to uphold this agreement.

Since there is in our Republic no little disagreement on the subject of religion, in order to prevent any such harmful strife from beginning among our people on this account as we plainly see in other realms, we mutually promise for ourselves and our successors forever, under the bond of our oath, faith, honor, and conscience, that we who differ with regard to religion (*dissidentes de religione*) will keep the peace with one another, and will not for a different faith or a changes of churches shed blood nor punish one another by confiscation of property, infamy, imprisonment, or banishment, and will not in any way assist any magistrate or office in such an act.
(Adapted from George Huntston Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, third edition [Ann Arbor, Michigan: Edwards Brothers, 1992], 1139–1140).

III. The Union of Utrecht, 1579 (excerpt)

". . . every citizen shall remain free in his religion, and no man shall be molested or questioned on the subject of divine worship."

IV. The Roman Catholic Hierarchy

Theodorus Potocki, by the grace of God and of the Holy See, Archbishop of Gniezno, Primate of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, etc.,

With these our present letters we serve notice to all concerned, or in future may be concerned, how the honorable Brendt Harms and Cornelis Grunau, for themselves and on behalf of the entire Mennonite community resident in the Marienburg Werder and elsewhere, have brought supplication to us to ascertain what recognition we are giving their rights, privileges and ordinances that were graciously granted their communities by the illustrious ordinaries the bishops of Kulm. As primate, under the power and ability of our episcopal authority we declare them ratified, approved and confirmed, even though we regard this as unnecessary and superfluous in view of the many privileges, ordinances and decrees that have been granted them by the glorious kings of Poland, as well as approved or allowed by the illustrious ordinaries the bishops of Kulm. Nonetheless, we have granted a gracious reception to the requests of these Mennonites and have affirmed the same rights, privileges, ordinances as well as the institutions and arrangements graciously granted by the illustrious local ordinaries, the bishops of Kula. These were all given them, and approved in all their points, clauses, articles, agreements and conditions by his eminence Cardinal Radziejowski, former archbishop of Gniezno, our predecessor, all of which we affirm word for word by this present document and expressly declare, as primate and by virtue of our authority beyond that of bishops, that we ratify, approve and confirm the mentioned rights and privileges in all points and clauses as stated above, insofar as they are not prejudicial or injurious to the rights of the Holy Roman Catholic Churches or her parishes in any way.

With this our letter we ratify, approve and confirm, and to certify this we have signed this document with our own hand and have ordered our seal to be affixed.

Given in Warsaw, in our archiepiscopal palace the
20th of October in the year of our Lord 1732.
Theodorus, Archbishop and Primate
(Translated by the author)

APPENDIX 2

Key Events and Dates in Polish History

1454–1466	In the Thirteen Years' War, the Teutonic Knights were defeated by Poland and the Prussian Union. The Knights were forced to restrict themselves to what would become East Prussia. The Grand Master became a vassal of the king of Poland. The Second Peace of Thorn was signed on the 19th of October 1466.
1520–1521	The Teutonic Knights tried to recapture some lost lands, but were unsuccessful.
1521	The Reformation gained strong support in various Polish and Prussian centers. Albert, Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights, adopted Lutheranism and secularized the Order's lands. As Duke Albert, he swore fealty to the king of Poland. Danzig became increasingly Lutheran.
1530s	Anabaptists began to settle along the Vistula.
1535	The Hansa forbade its members to transport any Anabaptists. Some Anabaptists from Moravia settled near Thorn, Kulm, and Graudenz. Duke Albert ordered Anabaptists expelled from his lands; many settled in the Vistula lowlands.
1543	Publication of *Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies* by Copernicus.
1548	Sigismund II Augustus became king of Poland and adopted a tolerant attitude toward the Reformation.
1549	Menno Simons wrote a letter to the "Church in Prussia" and mentioned his earlier visit there.
1569	By royal decree, Royal Prussia, with its own *Landtag*, was incorporated into the kingdom of Poland.
1573	The *Sejm* (Parliament) in the Confederation of Warsaw established religious toleration. The Jagellonian Dynasty died out

	in 1572, and in 1573 the *Sejm* elected a king.
1576–1577	War between Danzig and the king of Poland. By the peace terms, Danzig agreed to pay an indemnity but retained its privileges.
1586	Mennonites permitted to build a church in Montau.
1590	First Mennonite church in delta built in Elbing.
1598	Quiryn Vermeulen, former elder and champion of Mennonite unity in Danzig, had the Schottland, or "Mennisten," Bible printed (Dutch).
1613	Mennonites in the Vistula lowlands were granted exemption from military service in return for money payments.
1618–1648	The Thirty Years War spread devastation throughout much of Germany. Many parts of Poland were also affected.
1621	Brandenburg gained control over Ducal Prussia, which thereafter was governed from Berlin.
1622	Mennonites in the delta formed a fire insurance association—a model for the area.
1628	King Gustavus Adolphus landed in Pillau, conquered most of the coastline of Ducal and Royal Prussia, but did not conquer Danzig.
1638	Mennonite (Frisian) church built outside Danzig walls.
1642	Władysław IV issued charter affirming broad privileges for Mennonite settlers in Polish lands, and asserted that his grandfather invited them from the Netherlands.
1648	Mennonite (Flemish) church built outside Danzig walls.
1655	First Northern War began. Swedish army devastated much of the Vistula Delta.
1660	Peace of Oliwa ended war between Poland and Sweden.
1716	Peter the Great intervened in Polish internal strife and established temporary headquarters in Danzig.
1724	The Prussian king, Frederick William I, expelled Mennonites from his lands because of their rejection of military service. Fifteen years earlier he had allowed them to settle in depopulated areas.
1730	Russia and Prussia issued joint statement declaring intention of protecting "Protestant and Orthodox" dissidents in Poland and Lithuania.
1734	During the war of the Polish Succession, Russian and Saxon troops besieged Danzig and ravaged the delta.

1754	Mennonite church built at Rosenort in the Large Werder.
1768	Mennonite churches built in Fürstenwerder, Heubuden, Ladekopp, and Tiegenhagen.
1772	First partition of Poland. Royal Prussia, without Danzig and Thorn, fell under Prussian rule. The vast majority of Mennonites in Polish lands were thus brought under the Prussian crown.
1774	Mennonites in the lands annexed by Prussia were informed that in lieu of military service they would have to pay 5000 thalers annually to support the military academy in Kulm.
1763, 1785	Catherine the Great, tsarina of Russia, issued invitations to people in various countries to come to settle in newly conquered land in south Russia. Mennonites in Prussia also learned of this opportunity and began to consider emigration.
1786	Georg von Trappe, in the employ of Potemkin, vice regent of New Russia, urged Mennonites to move to the new lands. Officials in Danzig expressed their displeasure at the prospect of Mennonite emigration, but two emissaries, Jakob Hoeppner and Johann Bartsch, went to survey the opportunities in lands offered by Trappe.
1787	Some Mennonite families from West Prussia began moving to New Russia.
1788	Several hundred people met at the Rosenort Church to participate in a farewell service for 152 families moving to New Russia.
1789	Mennonite families reached Khortitsa on the Dnieper River and established a colony. Frederick William II issued a decree restricting further Mennonite acquisition of land (since military obligations were bound to land).
1793	Second partition of Poland. Danzig and Thorn (as well as other areas) were taken by Prussia.
1795	Rest of Poland divided among Austria, Prussia, and Russia.
1807	Napoleonic Wars came to the Vistula Delta. Danzig was besieged and occupied by Napoleon, the lowlands pillaged. Danzig was established as a "Free State" by Napoleon.
1808	The Flemish and Frisian Danzig Mennonites united to form one congregation.
1813	Prussian and Russian troops reconquered Danzig.

1815	The Congress of Vienna left Poland divided. The delta remained under Prussian rule, while a "Kingdom of Poland" was later created with the Russian tsar as king.
1818–19	The Mennonites in Danzig built a new church.
1830, 1831	Poles revolted against Russian rule, but the uprising was crushed.
1848	In the Frankfurt Parliament, Hermann von Beckerath, Mennonite leader in Krefeld, urged ending Mennonite military exemption.
1848	Otto von Bismarck asserted that if Polish nationalists were allowed to re-establish their homeland, German territories in the east, including East Prussia and Silesia, would eventually be taken by that state—a remarkably accurate foreshadowing of events a century later.
1854	Jakob Mannhardt, pastor of the Danzig Mennonite Church, founded the *Mennonitische Blätter*. The periodical continued to appear until 1941, when the German government ordered publication stopped.
1867	The German government issued a law terminating Mennonite exemption from military service; an Order-in-Council in 1868 modified this to permit noncombatant military service.
1870s	Mennonite churches in Prussia struggled with responses to the military policy of the government. In some churches, as at Heubuden, sharp differences developed. Eventually, the elder, most ministers, and some members decided to emigrate rather than accept military service. Gradually, however, the various churches decided to accept the new government demands.
1919	The Versailles Settlement created the Danzig Free City in the Vistula-Nogat Delta. Mennonites along the Vistula now found themselves under divided political jurisdictions: Poland, Germany, or the Free City.
Sept. 1, 1939	World War II began as the German ship *Schleswig Holstein* shelled the Polish fortification, Westerplatte, at Danzig.
1939–1945	During the war, Mennonite churches sustained heavy losses in battle.
Mar. 30, 1945	Last German troops in Danzig surrendered to Red Army. In weeks prior, thousands of Mennonites from the lands along the Vistula had fled to the West; others were expelled later.

They left a region that had been their homeland for 400 years. Most of these displaced persons found new homes in West Germany, Canada, and South America.

Jan. 1946 Under the auspices of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, some North American Mennonite young men helped to bring 490 heifers and 210 horses to Gdańsk to assist in the rebuilding of the Vistula Delta.

1947 Cornelius Dirkson, elder of the Thiensdorf congregation who had declined to flee to the West, was expelled from the new Poland. Under North American Mennonite auspices, the Mennonite Central Committee sent economic aid to Poland to help the nation rebuild. Tractors and plows, along with young men to operate the equipment, arrived in Poland during the spring.

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Abbreviations

APG	Archivum Państwowo w Gdańsku
APT	Archivum Państwowe w Toruniu
BGW	*Beiträge zur Geschichte Westpreussens*
BMHG	*Bijdragen en Mededeelingen van het Historisch Genootschaap*
BPANG	Biblioteka Polskiej Akademii Nauk w Gdańsku
CGK	*Christlicher Gemeinde-Kalender*
CWMS	*The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*
DALV	*Deutsches Archiv für Landes- und Volksforschung*
GAA	Gemeente Archief Amsterdam
GAA, HS	Gemeente Archief, Amsterdam de Hoop Scheffer, *Inventaris.*
GStaPK	Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin
HR	*Hanserezesse*
HS	*Hansische Studien*
HStAD	Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf
JMS	*Journal of Mennonite Studies*
MB	*Mennonitische Blätter*
ME	*Mennonite Encyclopedia*
MFS	*Mennonitische Forschungstelle*, Weierhof
MG	*Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter*
ML	*Mennonitisches Lexikon*
MLBC	*Mennonite Life* (Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas)
MQR	*Mennonite Quarterly Review*
MS	manuscript
MWG	*Mitteilungen des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins*
PA565	Particulier Archief 565 (Verenigde Doopsgezinde Gemeente Amsterdam)

PA877	Particulier Archief 877 (Doopsgezinde gemeenten van de Zon et al.)
PA1120	Particulier Archief 1120 (Doopsgezinde gemeenten van het Lam et al.)
StaH	Staatsarchiv Hamburg
StaK	Staatsarchiv Königsberg
VECT	Visitationis Episcopatus Culmensis, Toruń
WJB	*Westpreussen Jahrbuch*
ZK	*Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*
ZWG	*Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins*

Notes

Preface

1. Williams, *Radical Reformation*, 123.

2. See Verheyden, *Anabaptism in Flanders, 1530–1650*.

3. Terms for those who practiced believer's baptism appeared in various forms, such as *Täufer* for Moravian Hutterites and for Swiss and German dissenters. In the Netherlands, they were known as *Doopsgezinde* (baptism-minded). Eventually, a prominent branch of Anabaptists came to be known as Mennonites.

4. Van Braght, *Het Bloedigh Toneel*.

5. Williams, ed., *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, 84.

6. See *CWMS*, 31–50.

7. The name "Royal Prussia" was used to distinguish the region from "Ducal Prussia," the remnant of the region once ruled by the Teutonic Knights. The term "Polish Prussia" was often used synonymously with Royal Prussia. Much of this area came to be known as West Prussia when Frederick the Great seized this territory in 1772. Frederick himself sometimes used the term "Polish Prussia" when he referred to Polish regions he had seized.

8. At this time, the Polish Parliament, the *Sejm*, consisted of the Chamber of Deputies (lower house), the Senate (upper house), and the king.

Chapter 1. A Haven in Troubled Times

1. In 1867 G. H. de Wilde wrote that the drama had been produced annually in Amsterdam since Vondel wrote it. Near the end of the drama, Gijsbrecht receives the following advice:

"Zijn wil is, dat ghy treckt na'et vette land van Pruissen, / Daer uit het Poolsch geberght de Wijsselstroom koomt ruisschen, / Die d'oevers rijck van vrucht ge-

noeghelijck bespoelt. / Verhou u daer, en wacht tot dat de wraeck verkoelt. / Ghy zult in dit gewest een stad, Nieuw Holland, bouwen, / En in gezonde lucht, en weelige landouwen, / Vergeten al uw leet, en overbrogten druck; / Waer door uw naezaet klimt den bergh op van 't geluck." (I have slightly revised the English translation of Kristiaan P. Aercke, in *Joost van den Vondel*.)

2. Vondel's wide range of friends and admirers were drawn from a broad stratum of Amsterdam society. In 1641 he joined the Catholic Church.

3. In early modern times, the city regularly called itself "Danzig," although the spelling varied, so I am using the contemporary name, which persisted until the end of World War II.

4. For a discussion of the relevant political transformations, see Friedrich, *The Other Prussia*.

5. Verheyden, *Anabaptism in Flanders*.

6. Van Braght, *Het Bloedigh Toneel*.

7. MacCulloch, *Reformation*, 371.

8. Joris was an Anabaptist contemporary of Menno Simons (*ME*, II, 17—19).

9. HStaD, BJB, 239a, 134—135.

10. This bold assertion of independence, with its rationale for rejecting tyranny and insisting on a significant measure of political liberty, stands as a pioneering document in asserting the right to self-rule. For an English translation of the Dutch Declaration of Independence, see Peter J. Klassen, ed., *The Reformation: Change and Stability*, 66—70.

11. APG, 300, 19 (Pfahlkammerbücher).

12. Schildhauer, "Handelsbeziehungen," 24.

13. Harder-Gersdorff, "Lübeck, Danzig und Riga," 119.

14. Ibid., 121.

15. Christensen, *Dutch Trade to the Baltic*, 405.

16. Harder-Gersdorff, "Lübeck, Danzig und Riga," 121; see also Fedorowicz, ed., *Republic of Nobles*.

17. Christensen, *Dutch Trade to the Baltic*, 415. A last is approximately 4000 pounds.

18. Bogucka, "Zur Problematik der Profite," 43.

19. Bogucka, *Das alte Danzig*, 97.

20. Bogucka, "Danzig an der Wende," 94.

21. The resolution stipulated that if "eyn gemeine in eyner anzestadt mit dem ardoeme und ketterschen leere der wedderdoper edder sacramenterer bossmittet und behaft were und darinne heharrede," it was to be excluded from all commercial activity of the Hansa until corrective action had been taken (Friedland and Wentz, *HR*, 83).

22. Ibid., 24, 25.

23. This becomes evident when it is noted that Danzig Lutherans failed in efforts to exclude Calvinists from full equality in the city, as in efforts to exclude them from the city council or possession of churches.

24. The duke decreed that Anabaptists who refused to leave were to be deprived of life and property (Tschackert, *Urkundenbuch*, I, 203; see also II, 324, 326).

25. Ibid., III, 94.

26. APG, 358/132 (translated by the author).

27. *Urkundenbuch des Bisthums Culm*, 887. It must be noted that the king often issued statements prepared by his advisors. He also was often friendly to Mennonites and let them settle on crown lands. Part of this confused understanding of Mennonites arose because some ardent opponents of non-Catholics, such as Bishop Hosius, sometimes simply lumped dissidents into one category and dismissed them all as heretics and Münsterites.

28. Lengnich, *Geschichte der preussischen Lande* II, 131.

29. Ibid.

30. Friedrich, *Other Prussia*, 177.

31. Lengnich, *Geschichte der preussischen Lande* III, 189. No "herumlaufende Schotten" were to be allowed to live in Royal Prussia.

32. Ibid., II, 131.

33. Ibid., VII, 19–20.

34. Ibid., IX, 13.

35. Hartknoch, *Kirchen-Historia*, 719.

36. The senate was the upper chamber of the *Sejm* and also included a number of government and ecclesiastical officials.

37. Tazbir, *State Without Stakes*, 91.

38. Schramm, *Polnische Adel*, 262.

39. Wilbur, *Socinianism*, 363f. quoted in Williams, *Radical Reformation*, 1139ff.

40. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 6.

41. Tazbir, *State Without Stakes*, 209. For a fuller discussion of this document, see chapter 7 below.

42. Quoted in Eliott, *Europe Divided*, 234; Tazbir, *State Without Stakes*, 91.

43. Tazbir, *State Without Stakes*, 93, 95.

44. Hsia and van Nierop, ed., *Calvinism*, 2002.

45. Ibid.

46. On line at http://72.14.253.104/search?q=cache:MR6ZrqO_z6gJ:www.nnp.org/project/ricb.

47. John S. Wise, www.supremelaw.org/authors/wise/citizen4.htm.

48. See, for example, Armitage, "The Declaration of Independence" in *William and Mary Quarterly* (April 2002): 62–64; Coopmans, "Plaakaat van Verlatinge," 540–67; Lucas, "Het 'Plakkaat van Verlatinge,'" 187–207.

49. "From Revolution to Reconstruction," Alfa-Informatica, www.let.rug.nl/alfa/.

50. On line at http://personal.pitnet.net/primarysources/lucas.html.

51. In his superb analysis of the "prince of the humanists," Bainton writes that "Holland was the first country to grant toleration to the Mennonites" (*Erasmus*, 280). That, however, occurred several years after Poland had announced its policy of toleration.

52. APG, 368, III, 105.

53. BPANG, MS 450, 28, Bl. 380a–30, Bl. 406b. It is interesting to note that the Polish king also issued a statement supporting the Calvinists. He was determined to weaken the power of the city council.

54. Hartknoch, *Kirchen-Historia*, 524. By then Duke Albert was long dead, and Ducal Prussia had been brought under the administration of the Elector of Brandenburg, since Duke Albert's son was mentally incompetent.

55. Lengnich, *Geschichte der preussischen Lande* II, 126.

56. Ibid., 127.

57. The interaction of various centers of influence and power as well as the ambitious hopes of various participants is well illustrated in the efforts to find a bishop for Kulm when that see became vacant in 1537 (see Schmauch, "Marienburg: Das Bistum Culm," 115–149).

58. For a fuller discussion of this important development, see chapter 3 of this volume.

59. H. G. Mannhardt, *Danziger Mennonitengemeinde*, 104, 105.

60. Curicke, *Dantzig*, 31.

61. APG, 369, 1/42, 1169ff.

62. The French diplomat Charles Ogier made this comment after observing Mennonite agricultural achievements in the delta in 1635–36 (quoted in Kossmann, *Deutschen in Polen*, 84).

63. Szper, *Nederlandsche Nederzettingen*, 231.

64. Ciesielska, "Osadnictwo 'olęderski,'" 255.

65. BPANG, MS 1251, 12.

66. Bogucka, "Danzig an der Wende," 93.

67. Cieślak and Biernat, *Gdańsk*, 164–165.

68. Bogucka, "Danzig an der Wende," 93.

69. Ibid., 93–96.

70. See ibid., 97; Harder-Gersdorff, "Lübeck, Danzig und Riga," 24.

71. Bogucka, *Alte Danzig*, 102.

72. Ibid., 112.

73. BPANG, MS 1251," Bl. 7.

74. BPANG. MS 969, 300.

75. Hartknoch, *Kirchen-Historia*, 1082.

76. Ibid., 719. For a more detailed discussion of this issue, see chapter 7.

77. As Tazbir has noted, even with these restrictions, Poland's policies of religious toleration (not equality) still remained more generous than those of most other European states (*State Without Stakes*, 190–197).

78. A fuller review is given below in chapter 7.

79. BPANG, MS 973, Bl. 29.

80. BPANG, MS 694, Bl. 497–513. See the informative dissertation by Harvey Plett on this subject: "Georg Hansen and the Danzig Flemish Mennonite Church," 1991.

81. Hartknoch, *Kirchen-Historia*, 858.

82. H. G. Mannhardt, *Danziger Mennonitengemeinde*, 78.

Chapter 2. A Legacy of Rivers and Dikes

1. For a highly informative account of how dikes were built and maintained, see G. Driedger, *Werder*.

2. Ibid., 37; see also Lippky, "Deichgrafen," *WJB*, 21–27.

3. It should be noted that these geographical contours were altered when, as a result of a remarkable engineering feat, a new channel, flowing directly north into the Baltic, was created from the point where the river divided into two streams. This channel, completed in 1895, now became the Vistula's main route to the sea. The two branches, one flowing east to the lagoon, the other west past Danzig into the Baltic, continued as shipping lanes, but no longer as major arteries of the river.

4. Kromer, *Polska*, 42, quoted in Cossmann, *Deutschen in Polen*, 84.

5. H. G. Mannhardt, *Danziger Mennonitengemeinde*, 37.

6. The chronicler, Henneberger, is quoted in Penner, *Ost- und westpreussischen Mennoniten* I, 104.

7. Ibid., 105.

8. This was Jan Claeszen, who was later hanged in Amsterdam (Verheyden, *Anabaptism in Flanders*, 29).

9. Hartwich, *Geographisch-historische Landesbeschreibung*, 273.

10. Ibid., 59.

11. Penner, *Ost- und westpreussischen Mennoniten* I, 107.

12. Szper, *Nederlandsche Nederzettingen*, 231, quoted in Penner, *Ost- und westpreussischen Mennoniten* I, 397 (translated by the author).

13. APG, 492/222.

14. H. G. Mannhardt, *Danziger Mennonitengemeinde*, 38.

15. Nottarp, *Marienburger Werdern*, 26–55.

16. The total Mennonite population in the Vistula Delta was about 13,000 at the end of the eighteenth century (Kizik, *Mennonici*, 265).

17. Most frequently, Mennonites held land in emphyteutic tenure (long-term leases that were inheritable), although they also purchased land.

18. The chronicle, as well as a large collection of related documents, are to be found in the Mennonitische Forschungsstelle in Weierhof, Germany. This reference comes from the *Orlofferfelde Chronik*, 1. See also Penner, *Ost- und westpreussischen Mennoniten* I, 124–125.

19. APG, 358, 1047; *Orlofferfelde Chronik*, 7; Penner, *Ost- und westpreussischen Mennoniten* I, 123–125.

20. Although in many instances, original contracts are no longer extant, later agreements often cite earlier copies, e.g., contracts with Orloff (1639 and 1670) refer to an agreement made in 1601 (APG, 767, D/131; 767,D/126). In some of these agreements, names of settlers are listed.

21. APG, 889, D/223 (1750); 2/43, 75–77 (1650, confirmed in 1651).

22. APG, 300, 10, *Actum in Castro Christburgensi*, 49–52.

23. APG, 300/10, 83, 49.

24. APG, 768/130; 2/40, 66, 67.

25. APG, 300/1, 83, 50.

26. APG, 300/1, 83, 51.

27. King Michael granted Tiegenhagen "five free years," APG, 300/10, 49.

28. APG, 300/1, 83, 52.

29. APG, 300/1, 50, 51; Nottarp, *Marienburger Werdern*, 29, 41–44.

30. APG, 300/10, *Oblata Confirmationis Contractus*, 56.

31. Ludwig, *Besiedlung*, 55.

32. "Mennoniten im Weichsellande," *MG* (1940), 3.

33. Lists of some Mennonites who were invited to settle here in 1565 are recorded in *APG*, 361, 1/3798. The document speaks of casting lots for the various tracts of land.

34. Ludwig, *Besiedlung*, 51.

35. Ibid.

36. It is interesting to note that decrees against Mennonites were often given scant attention, for shortly after this order Mennonites were again living in the city (Hartwich, *Geographisch-historische Landesbeschreibung*, 276).

37. H. Klaassen, *Werderbauern*, 5. Remnants of these mounds are still visible in the delta.

38. Myovich, "Review Essay," 223.

39. Ludwig, *Besiedlung*, 50.

40. Penner, *Ost- und westpreussischen Mennoniten* I, 147.

41. Ibid., 147–148.

42. *Heubuden Urkundenbuch*, 74; Penner, *Ost- und westpreussischen Mennoniten* I, 148.

43. Penner, *Ost- und westpreussischen Mennoniten* I, 136.

44. Ludwig, *Besiedlung*, 58.

45. H. Penner, "Die westpreussischen Mennoniten im Wandel der Zeiten," *MG*, Nr. 2 (1950), 21.

46. They apparently tried to settle in Elbing but were denied permission. They then moved to local Mennonite villages (Neubaur, "Mährische Brüder," 447–455).

47. Ibid.; see also Von Schlachta, *Hutterische Konfession*, 389–392.

48. Ludwig, *Besiedlung*, 52.

49. G. Driedger, *Werder*, 54.

50. Lengnich, *Geschichte der preussischen Lande*, VIII, 126–127.

51. Ibid., IX, 9.

52. Penner, *Ost- und westpreussischen Mennoniten* I, 112.

53. "Weichsel-Nogat Delta," *CGK* (1938), 67–68.

54. See Kizik, "Radical Attempt," 127–130; Myovich, "Review Essay," 219–223.

55. APG, 717, D/1, 717, D/103.

56. APG, 368/III, 163.

57. APG, 635/1, 635/2.

Chapter 3. The Challenges of Urban Settings

1. Although Danzig was under the crown of Poland, its economic strength and its loyalty to the king during war with the Teutonic Knights assured it a large measure of autonomy.

2. BPANG, MS 450, 306–307.

3. BPANG, MS 450, 384–386.

4. BPANG, MS 450, 397–400.

5. BPANG, MS 450, 397–401.

6. HR *vierte Abteilung* II, 83.

7. Tschackert, *Urkundenbuch*, 203.

8. *CWMS*, 1030.

9. *ME*, II, 9–12; H. G. Mannhardt, *Danziger Mennonitengemeinde*, 105.

10. Kizik, "Radical Attempt," 127.

11. Hartknoch, *Kirchen-Historia*, 794; Cieślak and Biernat, *Gdańsk*, 110.

12. Löschin, *Geschichte Danzigs* I, 253–4; Cieślak and Biernat, *Gdańsk*, 110; see also Kizik, "Radical Attempt," 152.

13. APG, 358; Muhl, *Dörfer auf der Danziger Höhe,* 108–110. It is interesting to note that when Frederick II seized control of most of Royal Prussia, he combined a number of these villages to form a new city, Stolzenberg, which was supposed to increase economic pressure on the beleaguered city of Danzig (ibid., 167, 168).

14. Lengnich, *Ius Publicum Civitatis Gedanensis,* 529.

15. Szper, *Nederlandsche Nederzettingen,* 36–38.

16. Records show that from 1537 until 1709 at least 135 Scots gained citizenship in Danzig (Ruffmann, "Engländer und Schotten," 17–39).

17. APG, 300R/Vv, 147.

18. APG, 300, 53/18, 114.

19. Bogucka, "Zur Problematik," 65ff.

20. APG, 300R/ vv, 480–483. The measure was adopted in 1648.

21. Friedrich, *Other Prussia,* 139.

22. Ibid., 139–140.

23. Lengnich, *Geschichte der preussischen Lande,* VII, 171.

24. Ibid., II, 245.

25. Gravendeel, Stuve, and Voolstra, *Bezweegen Broederschap,* 98, passim.

26. GAA, HS II C, No. 811.

27. APG, 300, 10/81, 48–50. For detailed discussion of this contentious issue, see Kizik, "Radical Attempt," 127–151.

28. APG, 300,10/81, 306–307. The charge appears strange in view of the low profile Mennonites maintained in their religious practices.

29. GAA, HS, II, C, No. 818.

30. Discussed in Grigoleit-Ackelningken, "Danziger Mennoniten," 124–127; and Kizik, "Radical Attempt," 134.

31. See Kizik, *Mennonici,* 24–37.

32. Ludwig, *Zur Besiedlung des Weichseldeltas,"* 159–65; see also Kizik, "Radical Attempt," 150.

33. APG, R/F, fols. 165 f.; see also APG, 300, R/F, 162.

34. APG, *Informatio contra Mennonistas,* 300R/Vvq, 24B, 597–603.

35. APG, 300, R/11, 527; GAA, II, No. 836.

36. GAA, HS, II C, No. 825.

37. Cieślak and Biernat, *Gdańsk,* 245.

38. Lengnich, *Ius publicum Gedanensis,* 557.

39. Kizik, "Polnische Forschungen," 90.

40. Friedrich, *Other Prussia,* 199.

41. At least twenty-two Mennonites from Danzig settled in the city in 1749–52 (Kizik, "Radical Attempt," 150).

42. APG, 300, R/F 7, fols. 165–166.

43. *ME,* 40.

44. Penner, *Ost- und westpreussischen Mennoniten* I, 67.

45. APG, 300, R / Bd. 11, 1099–1201.

46. Penner, *Ost- und westpreussischen Mennoniten* I, 66–67; *ME*, I, 40–41; II, 661–662.

47. Curicke, appendix, "Poetischer Abriss des weltberühmten Momberschen Coffee-Hauses in Dantzig, entworffen von Solando, 1734," not paginated.

48. Ibid.; *ME*, III, 739; Penner, *Ost- und westpreussischen Mennoniten* I, 211–212.

49. Kauenhoven, "Alcohol Among the Mennonites of Northeast Germany," *GAMEO*, 1955. Online at www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/A4386.html.

50. Penner, *Ost- und westpreussischen Mennoniten* I, 216; letter from Dr. Horst Gerlach, 11, February 2007.

51. In his tragedy, *Der Menonit* [*sic*], Ernst von Wildenbruch had one of his characters express this sentiment when he said, "Gott segne euren Necktartranck" (quoted in Bruno Pompecki, *Literaturgeschichte der Provinz Westpreussen* [Danzig: Kafemann, 1915], 86).

52. Kizik, "Radical Attempt," 150.

53. Kizik, "Polnische Forschungen," 90.

54. APG, 300/10, Nr. 155; Penner, *Ost- und westpreussischen Mennoniten* I, 392.

55. "... unter ihre eigenen Nahmen ... besitzen und bewohnen," APG, 300/10, fol. 83, 439.

56. APG, 300/10, folios 24, 26, 30, 60, 67 ff.

57. APG, 300/10, fol. 58.

58. H. G. Mannhardt, *Danziger Mennonitengemeinde*, 94ff.; APG, A 300, 10, Nr. 58, 59, 68; Penner, *Ost- und westpreussischen Mennoniten* I, 214, 215; 392–394.

59. Händiges, "Beiträge," 35.

60. Abraham Hartwich, a Lutheran pastor and historian in Royal Prussia, commented on the significant economic role of Mennonites in Elbing and noted that this had allowed them to become citizens (*Geographisch-historische Landesbeschreibung*, 276).

61. Carstenn, *Elbing*, 360–62.

62. APG, 369, 1/26, 292.

63. APG 369, 1/26, 155.

64. APG, 369, 1/109, 486.

65. In Gdańsk, for example, Mennonite weavers were not granted this kind of recognition. For Elbing, see APG, 369, 1/108, 157.

66. Carstenn, *Elbing*, 369.

67. Friedrich, *Other Prussia*, 143.

68. APG, 369, 1/109, 483.

69. APG, 492/259, 151–152.
70. APG, 369, 1/40, 12671–1262.
71. Donner, *Orlofferfelde Chronik*, 4–5.
72. APG, 369, 1/37, 105.
73. APG, 369, 1/76, 101.
74. APG, 369, 1/73, 367–8.
75. APG, 369, 1/54, 532–33.
76. APG, 369, 1/109, 484.
77. APG, 369, 1/63, 87–8.
78. APG, 369, 1/68, 180–1.
79. APG, 369, 1/80, 604.
80. Penner, *Ost- und westpreussischen Mennoniten* I, 216–217.
81. "Since these Mennonites are free and not bound by serfdom, they and their descendants shall be allowed to retain this liberty," Randt, *Mennoniten in Ostpreussen und Litauen*, 22.
82. Penner, *Ost- und westpreussischen Mennoniten* I, 218.
83. Randt, *Mennoniten in Ostpreussen und Litauen*, 11.
84. Ibid., 18.
85. GStaPK, Direktorium Ostpreussen, II, Nr. 6102, 10.
86. In 1723 the king declared, "No Mennonites shall be tolerated in my lands" (Randt, *Mennoniten in Ostpreussen und Litauen*, 30).
87. The complaint, dated 19 September 1723 and sent to the king, contends that this action violated earlier assurances made by the government in a "Patent" granted in 1713 (GStaPK, General-Direktorium Ostpreussen, II, 6101, 8).
88. *ME*, III, 374.
89. Randt, *Mennoniten in Ostpreussen und Litauen*, 35, 36.
90. Ibid., 48, 49.
91. GStaPK, General Direktorium Ostpreussen, II, 6102, 11ff. The decree was addressed to Mennonites "in den Städten oder auf dem platten Lande."
92. Randt, *Mennoniten in Ostpreussen und Litauen*, 55.
93. H. G. Mannhardt, *Danziger Mennonitengemeinde*, 88–89.
94. GStaPK, Berlin Direktorium Ostpreussen, II, Nr. 6102, 219.
95. GSstPK, Berlin, Directorium Ostpreussen, II, Nr. 6102, 88.
96. Randt, *Mennoniten in Ostpreussen und Litauen*, 112.
97. Ibid., 112.
98. GStaPK, Direktorium Westpreussen und Netze Distrikt, CIX, No. 1, vol. II, 301–302.
99. See Gingerich, "Mennonitengemeinde Königsberg," 22.

Chapter 4. Along the Banks of Poland's Mighty River

1. See Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings*, 289–291.

2. The agreement stipulated that the settlers were "Hollanders" and were represented by Thomas and Peter Janssen, Andreas Unrauh, and others (Wiebe, *Siedlungswerk*, 19, 58). See also APG, 732, D/103, 1568–1569.

3. APG, 358, 123. See Krannhals, *Rolle der Weichsel*, 352–379.

4. APG, 358, 124.

5. BPANG, MS 1251, 7.

6. Wiebe, "Weichselgebiet," 36.

7. APG, 732, D/97.

8. Wiebe, *Siedlungswerk*, 4.

9. APG, 358, 128.

10. APG, 358, 131.

11. Wiebe, *Siedlungswerk*, 22.

12. Schröder, *Tagebuch*, quoted in Wiebe, "Weichselgebiet," 37.

13. The local church elder reported that "many cattle" drowned (Wiebe, "Weichselgebiet," 37, 38).

14. APG, 358.

15. APG, 258, 771.

16. APG, 358, 772, 773, 775.

17. APG, 358, 791.

18. Wiebe, *Siedlungswerk*, 28.

19. APP, B VIII.

20. APP, B VIII; APG, 0391.

21. Wiebe, *Siedlungswerk*, 22.

22. Maercker, "Schwetzer Kreises," II, 251.

23. APG, Kontributionskataster, 181, 13084; APG 10, 05.

24. Maercker, "Schwetzer Kreises," II, 19.

25. Wiebe, *Siedlungswerk*, 23.

26. The king personally was torn between Catholicism and Protestantism.

27. An account of how a number of persons, including Franz Kopper, acquired the village in 1745 is given in Wiebe, *Siedlungswerk*, 100–104. It was written by some of the villagers to remind their descendants of "how much concern, work and cost" the venture had required.

28. Wiebe, *Siedlungswerk*, 27.

29. Jantzen, *At Home in Germany?* 352–353. The rift was formally ended in 1921.

30. APG, 358, 827.

31. Froehlich, *Graudenzer Kreises*, Bd. 1, 349, 362.

32. Ibid., 349.

33. For accounts of settlements in the region, see Toeppen, *Geographie von Preussen* (1858).

34. See "Gnadenfeld," *ML*, II, 128–129.

35. See, for example, the personal account written by a Frisian Mennonite elder, "Bezoekreis van Hendrik Berents Hulshoff," esp. 62–64. A slightly edited version appears in *Bijdragen en Mededeelingen*, LIX (1938).

36. Szper, *Nederlandsche Nederzettingen*, 210–215; *ME*, II, "Haxenberg, Willibald," 682.

37. APG, Kontributionskataster 181, 13109.

38. Maercker, "Schwetzer Kreises," II, 175.

39. APG, 358, 125.

40. Maercker, "Schwetzer Kreises," II, 220.

41. GStaPK, IX, 1. It should be noted that serfdom still existed in many parts of the realm.

42. Unruh, "Mennoniten in der Neumark," *CGK* (1941), 60.

43. Unruh, "Kolonisatorische Berührungen," DALV, 269.

44. *ME*, I, 416.

45. Unruh, "Mennoniten in der Neumark," 62.

46. Ibid., 67.

47. Lange's views are clearly reflected in a letter of admonition to church leaders in the "Kortitzer Gemeinen," 30 January 1824: "Dinge, wodurch unsere ganze Kirchen-Verfassung geschändet . . . wird" have been permitted by church leaders (BPANG, 28, 29).

48. APG, 322, 352; "Culm," *ME*, I, 745.

49. "Culm," *ME*, I, 745.

50. Some documents indicate that the right to set up their own schools was granted as early as 1616.

51. Later regulations for the village are outlined in APG, 841.

52. Hulshoff, *Bezoekreis*; *CGK* (1941), 145; MG (1939), 34–36.

53. Wiebe, *Siedlungswerk*, 37.

54. VECT, *Fontes* VI, Fons VI, 151.

55. Thus, about six of the participating villages in the fire insurance association had a Mennonite *Schulze* (Wiebe, *Siedlungswerk*, 37).

56. VECT, *Fontes* VI, Fons VII, 164.

57. "Hollanders have settled here and they give nothing" (quoted in Wiebe, *Siedlungswerk*, 10).

58. Heym, *Kampf mit der Weichsel*, 10–12.

59. Wernicke writes that "eine grosse Zahl Mennoniten aus der Tilsiter Nie-

derung" emigrated to this area (*Kreis Marienwerder*, 56). It is, of course, correct to state that in some instances authorities did not admit them (61). Wernicke also notes that a number of Mennonites in this area engaged in linen-weaving (209, 210). See also StaK, 181, 13075.

60. Wernicke, *Kreis Marienwerder*, 65.

61. Ibid., 93. "Sie [this architectural style] zieht ein als die Mennoniten die untere Niederung urbar machen."

62. ME, IV, 741.

63. Biskup, *Historia Torunia*, III, 276. Some local historians state that the (former) Lutheran wooden church in Górsk was once the worship center for Mennonites and Lutherans (personal conversation with Professor Janusz Małek of the University of Toruń).

64. Heuer, *Holländerdörfer*, 123.

65. Biskup, *Historia Torunia*, II, 277.

66. Ibid.

67. APT, Kat. II, Abteil. 3, Acta I, 9, 10.

68. Goertz, "Mennoniten in der Thorner Niederungen," WJB (1963), 124–126.

69. Ibid., 123; *MB* (1891), 15–18; (1892), 99–101; (1905), 29; *CGK* (1906), 107–114.

70. APT, Zamek Dybowski, 18. VI. 1763, "Nieszawka."

71. Maercker, *Drei kleineren Städte*, 400–402. See also *MB* (1905), 29.

72. Kupsch, *Baptisten in Polen*, 59–61.

73. E. Ratzlaff, *Im Weichselbogen*, 60–63.

74. Ibid., 78–85.

75. Ibid., passim.

76. Kosciuszko led a revolt against Russia between the second and third partitions but failed to free his country from foreign domination.

77. Marchlewski, "Religious Contacts," 199–213; Szałygin et al., *Catalogue of Monuments*.

Chapter 5. Bridges between the Netherlands and the Vistula Delta

1. Harder-Gersdorff, "Lübeck, Danzig and Riga," 24.

2. Ibid., 121. See also Christensen, *Dutch Trade*, 405.

3. Royal Prussia was under the Polish crown. Sometimes it was also called Polish Prussia to distinguish it from East, or Ducal Prussia. Cartographers and writers often used the term "Polish Prussia" for clarity. The term "West Prussia" came into use after the first partition, when most of Royal Prussia was seized by Frederick II and given that designation.

4. Cieślak and Biernat, *Gdańsk*, 161–166.

5. Ibid., 164.

6. APG, 358/132. Translated by the author.

7. For a striking portrait of Dutch cultural life at this time, see Schama, *Embarrassment of Riches*.

8. Cuny, *Danzigs Kunst und Kultur*, 75. Citizens were required to be prepared to take up arms for their city.

9. Knetsch, "Künstlerfamilie von dem Block," 26–32; Horst Penner, "Niederländische Täufer," *MG* (1969), 17–21.

10. In the language of the city: "Es müsse wohl gehen denen, die Dich lieben; es müsse Friede sein inwendig in Deinen Mauern und Glück in Deinen Palästen."

11. Cuny, *Danzigs Kunst und Kultur*, 79.

12. H. Penner, "Niederländische Täufer," 23.

13. Cuny, *Danzigs Kunst und Kultur*, 85, 86.

14. H. Penner, *Ost- und Westpreussische Mennoniten* I, 36, 39, 81–84; "Niederländische Täufer," 13.

15. Cuny, *Danzigs Kunst und Kultur*, 51.

16. Simson, *Stadt Danzig*, II, 457.

17. Vos, *Doopsgezinden te Antwerpen*, 374ff.

18. Cuny, *Danzigs Kunst und Kultur*, 348, 349.

19. Bogucka, "Danzig an der Wende," 93.

20. APG, 300R/Vv 29, 177–198.

21. This attack was carried on by pamphlets distributed in the city (APG, 300, R/vol. 5, folio 311.

22. BPANG, MS Ortmann, folio 34a, 53.

23. Lengnich, *Ius Publicum Civitatis Gedanensis*, 557.

24. APG, 300, 10/82, folios 22ff., 40–41a.

25. Dapper, *Historische Beschryving*; see also Sellin, *Pioneering in Penology*; Curicke, *Dantzig*, 173; Hallema, "Wat was eens in Dantzig. . . Amsterdamsch?" 3.

26. Hart, *Geschrift en Getal*, 170.

27. Dekker, *Voortrekkers*, 31.

28. Penner, *Ost- und Westpreussische Mennoniten* I, 181; see also H. G. Mannhardt, *Danziger Mennonitengemeinde*, passim.

29. Heinrich Donner, *Chronik*, APG, 358/301, 18. The dispute centered on rebaptism of someone who had been baptized as an infant. Donner declared that "die Taufe der wichigste Punct unserer Vereinigung wäre auch noch bey allen unseren Gemeinen in Holland."

30. Letter from four congregations urging the Waterlander and the "High German" churches to resolve their differences (15 July 1615), GAA, HS, II, B, 2626.

31. GAA, HS, I, A, No. 1746 (19 February 1660); GAA, HS I, A, No. 1786 (19

April 1732); GStaPK, Direktorium, Osptreussen, II, 6102 (22 February 1732).

32. "Orloff int groote Marienburgische Werder, 2 Martin 1677 . . . ande werde dienaren . . . tot Amsterdam," GAA, HS, I, A, No. 1552.

33. From the church in Danzig to the church *bij het Lam* in Amsterdam (9 March 1677), GAA, HS I, A, No.1553; from the church in the Large Werder to the church in Amsterdam (24 November 1677), GAA, HS I, A, No. 1554; circular from the church *bij het Lam* to the churches of the *Doopsgezinde* in the Netherlands (24 November 1678), GAA, HS I, A, No. 1560.

34. Letter from the church in *bij het Lam* stating that the church *bij de Zon* is also requested to respond to the need (30 January 1680), GAA, HS, I, A, No. 1566.

35. Pieter van Rickstel, Elbing, to the church in Amsterdam (26 May 1709), GAA, HS, I, A, No. 1569.

36. Letter from the Dutch Mennonite Commission to "oudste" Heinrich Donner (6 May 1788), GAA, HS, I, A, No. 1744.

37. GAA, PA1120, No. 705.

38. Letter from the Commission in the Netherlands to David Penner, Jacob Bestevader, Jan van Hoek, and Lodewijk Rump in Danzig (24 May 1726), GAA, I, A, 1572; see the reply from Jan van Hoek et al. to Danzig (22 June 1726), GAA, HS, I, A, No. 1572.

39. GAA, HS, I, A, No. 1662 (20 June 1737).

40. Letter from Jacob Kinn in Danzig to Galenus Abrahams in Amsterdam (7 August 1696), GAA HS, II, B, No. 2630.

41. Letters from the Danzig Mennonites asking that two men, baptized as infants but now wishing to join the Mennonites, be baptized in Amsterdam so that the conflict with Danzig statutes might be avoided (5 July 1730), GAA, HS, II, B, 2636.

42. "Predigt, ... 31 Juli 1937, Danzig Mennonitenkirche," 3. In *Sippentag in der Mennonitenkirche zu Danzig* (Danzig, 1937), 154. Translated by the author.

Chapter 6. Psalms, Sermons, and Congregations

1. *CWMS*, 1033, 1034.

2. *ME*, II, 65–66; C. J. Dyck et al., eds., *Dirk Philips*.

3. The terms suggested that the two groups came from different regions, but while there was originally some truth to that assumption, the groups held differing views on such issues as the extent to which a church should adopt changing cultural expressions and mores. They sometimes shared visiting ministers from the Netherlands. A comparison of the two confessions presented to the examining bishop in 1678 in Danzig by van Duhren (Frisian) and Hansen (Flemish) reveals a close similarity (BPANG, MS 973 and MS 694).

4. In 1578 Lutherans in the Bärwalde village met in a granary (Nottarp, *Marienburger Werdern*, 95).

5. W. Mannhardt, "Unser Kirchenbau vor 50. Jahren."

6. Ibid., 12.

7. APG, 449, 430.

8. BPANG, Ortmann Collection, MS 1251, "Urkunden und Notizen zur Geschichte der Mennoniten," Bl. 7f.

9. GAA, A 1558.

10. Penner, *Ost- und westpreussischen Mennoniten* I, 184.

11. *Orlofferfelde Kirchenbuch*, 63; see also ME, IV, 85.

12. *MB* (1912), 39–40.

13. H. G. Mannhardt, *Danziger Mennonitengemeinde*, 44.

14. A. Driedger, "Entwicklung," 31.

15. Letkemann, "Gesangbücher," 122.

16. Published in Alckmaar by Jacob de Meester, 1605; copy in the Radbout Universiteit, Nijmegen.

17. Born in Flanders, Mander was an Anabaptist whose beliefs led him to Amsterdam, where he wrote and painted.

18. Letkemann, "Hymnody and Choral Music," 68–73.

19. A. Driedger, "Entwicklung," 31.

20. Letkemann, "Gesangbücher," 121–123.

21. *ME*, II, 448; Letkemann, "Gesangbücher," 121–123.

22. Copy in the Mennonite Library and Archives, Fresno, Pacific University, Fresno.

23. H. G. Mannhardt, *Danziger Mennonitengemeinde*, 166.

24. *ME*, III, 794.

25. A. Driedger, "Entwicklung," 31.

26. Hartwich, *Geographisch-historische Landesbeschreibung*, 290.

27. H. G. Mannhardt, *Danziger Mennonitengemeinde*, 107.

28. Letkemann, "Gesangbücher," 122.

29. Lengnich, *Ius Publicum Civitatis Gedanensis*, 509.

30. Penner, *Ost- und westpreussischen Mennoniten* I, 173.

31. Published in Königsberg from 1846–1848. The quotation is from volume 1, page 1.

32. Quiring, "Mennoniten in Westpreussen," 33.

33. Many of the signatories list the place in the Netherlands or North Germany from which they or their family had come (Quiring, "Mennoniten in Westpreussen," 34–35).

34. Löschin, *Geschichte Danzigs*, 94.

35. "Enoch Seemann, Sr.," *ME*, IV, 495; Muttray, "Enoch Seemann," 59–61.

36. *Offenbahrung und Bestraffung des Gergen Hansens Thorheit* (Stolzenberg, 1697).

37. Visser and Sprunger, *Menno Simons*, 147.

38. GAA, II, 2633.

Chapter 7. A House Divided

1. Numerous instances where kings, local administrators, and city councils issued contradictory decrees and orders at various times could be cited. Clearly, local authority remained an important factor.

2. Bidder, "Beiträge," 295–296.

3. This was the case in the late 1600s, but in 1717 this exemption was ended (Hartwich, *Geographisch-historische Landesbeschreibun*, 204).

4. BPANG, MS 1251, fol. 7, "1586 ist das Bethaus der Mennoniten zu Montau zum ersten Mal gebaut."

5. BPANG, MS 1251, fol. 7; *ME*, III, 744.

6. Carstenn, *Elbing*, 401.

7. Curicke, *Dantzig*, 31.

8. Tschackert, *Urkundenbuch*, II, 324.

9. Lengnich, *Geschichte der preussischen Lande*, II, 131. Unitarians were sometimes called Picards.

10. Ibid., II, 112.

11. Ibid., II, 399.

12. Several Lutheran churches in Danzig and elsewhere became embroiled in disputes about pietism (Löschin, *Geschichte Danzigs*, I, 373; II, 48).

13. Lengnich, *Geschichte der preussischen Lande*, II, 71.

14. Hartknoch, *Kirchen-Historia*, 484.

15. BPANG, MS 450, 306, 307.

16. BPANG. MS 450, 384, 385.

17. Kerstan, *Evangelische Kirche*, 46.

18. Grunau, *Preussische Chronik*, II, 63.

19. Keyser, *Deutschen Weichsellandes*, 129, 130.

20. Hartknoch, *Kirchen-Historia*, 1082; Hartwich, *Geographisch-historische Landesbeschreibung*, 290.

21. Hartwich, *Geographisch-historische Landesbeschreibung*, 91, 95; Nottarp, *Marienburger Werdern*, 83. A number of church registers are preserved in the Gdańsk archives, as well in German and North American archives.

22. M. Toeppen, ed., "Originalurkunde Gustav Adolfs," 104.

23. For an overview of Axel Oxenstierna's efforts to assist Protestants in the delta, see Böhme, *Schwedische Besetzung*, especially 44–191.

24. Hartwich, *Geographisch-historische Landesbeschreibung*, 119.

25. Nottarp, *Marienburger Werdern*, 70–71.

26. Ibid., 26–35.

27. Ibid., 30.

28. See, for example, the frequent references to such mutual aid in contemporary records (APG, 300/10,83, pp. 53–70).

29. APG, 17/247.

30. GStaPK, Staatsarchiv Königsberg, Rep. 2, Nr. 2878, vol. 4/3, 315a–b (the Malachowski accord).

31. See Nottarp, *Marienburger Werdern*, for a discussion of the lengthy legal process.

32. Penner, *Ost- und westpreussischen Mennoniten* I, 384.

33. Lengnich, *Ius Publicum Civitatis Gedanensis*, 529: "Of this, the Third Order wished to hear nothing."

34. Mężynski, *Mennonites in Poland*, 16.

35. "Confession oder Kurtze einfeltige Glaubens Bekantnus derer so man Menonisten [*sic*] nennet in Preussen, Im Jahr des Herren Anno MDCLX," Mennonitische Forschungsstelle.

36. The name appears with various spellings. The manuscript record of the meeting on 17 January 1678 uses the form "Dieren," BPANG, MS 973, 29.

37. In a letter concerning doctrinal issues, Hendrik van Duhren and his congregation asked the Amsterdam Mennonites to give advice on answering questions posed by the bishop (GAA, II 696).

38. See "Religions Puncten der Mennonisten so man die Bekümmerte nennet," BPANG, MS 973.

39. The written report provides a succinct response: "*ultimum negat*," ibid., 973, 29.

40. "Ihrer königl. Majest. In Pohlen Johanni III übergeben in Dantzig," BPANG, MS 694, 497.

41. A printed copy of the confession of faith as well as Hansen's responses, dated 1678, is found in the Gdańsk Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences. A manuscript copy has also been preserved (BPANG, MS 694 and 973). This manuscript also contains Hansen's *Einfältige Antwort*, 17–136.

42. BPANG, MS 694, 497ff. The document, titled "Confession oder kurtze, einfältige Glaubens Bekäntnüsse der Mennonisten in Preussen, so man nennet die Clarchen," does not state how long the session or sessions lasted.

43. For a thorough study of Hansen's views, see Plett, "Georg Hansen."

44. Question 35 in the addendum to Hansen's confession (p. 56); see also Plett, "Georg Hansen," 285.

45. H. G. Mannhardt, *Danziger Mennonitengemeinde*, 88.

46. GAA, HS, II, C, No. 696.

47. See letters sent from Amsterdam and Hamburg, StaH, *Unterakte Amsterdam*, 1–10; *Unterakte Danzig*, 1–6.

48. GAA, HS, II, B, No. 2932 (January 1613).

49. See Williams, *Radical Reformation*, 1173–1175.

50. See Robert Friedmann, "Anti-Trinitarianism," *ME*, I, 131–133.

51. Schröter, *Stammbuch*, 3.

52. BPANG, Uphagen manuscript, 133, p. 1329.

53. BPANG, MS 495, 97, pp. 89a–b.

54. BPANG, MS 494, 374.

55. Gravendeel, Stuve, and Voolstra, *Bezweegen Broedershap*, 95, 98, and passim.

56. GAA, III, C, No. 741 (4 Juni 1731).

57. BPANG, MS 494, 374.

58. Löschin, *Geschichte Danzigs*, I, 55.

59. BPANG, MS 495, 96, p. 82a; Löschin, *Geschichte Danzigs*, I, 55.

60. GAA, II, B, No. 2644, "hoe beperkt toch hunne vrijheid is" (19 September 1739).

61. Hulshoff, "Bezoekreis van Hendrik Berents Hulshoff," 32–82.

62. Unruh, "Kolonisatorische Berührungen," 267.

63. Ibid., 268.

64. Ibid., 268–69.

65. Donner, *Chronik*, 17–19; see also *Orlofferfelde Chronik*, 9, for a statement by Heinrich Donner arguing that Mennonite churches should be open to welcoming members from other religious groups, but only through adult baptism.

66. GStaPK, II, Generaldirektorium, Westpreussen u. Netzedistrikt, CIX, No. 1, vol. 2, fol. 152.

67. Donner, *Chronik*, 43–44.

68. GStaPK, Generaldirektorium, Westpreussen u. Netzedistrikt, fol. 152–154.

69. Donner, *Chronik*, 53–55.

70. BPANG, Uphagen MS, 133, p. 1329. The event is reported in 1692.

71. GStaPK, Direktorium Ostpreussen, II, 6102, p. 30.

72. Wernicke, *Kreis Marienwerder*, 205.

73. Ibid., 157.

74. APG, 01018, 4, Schulangelegenheiten; Waschinski, *Kirchliche Bildungswesen*, 482.

75. APG, 01018, 4; Waschinski, *Kirchliche Bildungswesen*, 486.

76. Waschinski, *Kirchliche Bildungswesen*, 535.

77. Kerstan, *Evangelische Kirche*, 206–208.

78. Bidder, "Beiträge," 348.

79. Ibid., 346.

80. APG, 17, 246, p. 83.

81. GAA, I, A, No. 1597 (13 September 1732).

82. GAA, I, A, No. 1601 (20 April 1733).

83. APG, 846/1, 407: "weil sie Dissidenten sind und der römischen Kirche nicht angehören."

Chapter 8. Conflicting Loyalties in a Progressive Society

1. W. Mannhardt, *Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten*, 43.

2. Ibid., XXXII.

3. Lubieniecki, *Polish Reformation*; Brock, *Freedom From Violence*.

4. *CWMS*, 1030–1035.

5. See, for example, his "Foundation of Christian Doctrine, 1539," in *CWMS*, 103–226.

6. In disputations conducted at various places, Mennonites repeatedly upheld this belief. At one such meeting at Frankenthal in 1571, Mennonites declared that a Christian should not take the "sword to exact revenge." At another disputation, held in Emden in 1578, they stated that they would not "take up arms to defend the city." And again, at a meeting in Leeuwarden in 1596, Mennonites declared that "Christians were not permitted to take up arms in war" (W. Mannhardt, *Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten*, 29–31).

7. *Confession oder Kurtze einfeltige Glaubensbekantnus*, 1660, 37, 38.

8. "Eine gar kurze iedoch deutliche Beschreibung vom Gottes Dienst der Mennonisten im Werder. . . mithin auch Acht und dreissig Frag[en] u. Antwort[en] . . .," APG, 492/1021, pp. 1–24.

9. APG, 492/1021, p. 23.

10. Hansen, "Confession," BPANG, 1678, MS 694.

11. See Plett, "Georg Hansen and the Danzig Flemish Mennonite Church."

12. W. Mannhardt, *Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten*, 42.

13. van der Smissen, *MB* (July 1854), 31; see also H. G. Mannhardt, *Danziger Mennonitengemeinde*, 70–71.

14. W. Mannhardt, *Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten*, 71.

15. See Crichton, *Geschichte der Mennoniten*, 23.

16. See Froese, "Stets hilfreich und tolerant entgegengekommen?" 56–72.

17. W. Mannhardt, *Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten*, 84–85.

18. This bizarre series of events is recorded in BPANG, MS 211, and 336ff.

19. Lengnich, *Geschichte*, VIII, 126–127.

20. W. Mannhardt, *Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten*, 86–87; Crichton, *Geschichte der Mennoniten*, 26–27.

21. The text of the king's decree is given in W. Mannhardt, *Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten,* 87–89 (German), and LXV–LXVI (Latin).

22. The text of this decree is given in ibid., 90–91.

23. It should be noted that, despite this affirmation of traditional Mennonite religious liberties, in 1750, after a long battle with the Danzig guilds, Augustus agreed to restrict some economic occupations of the Mennonites (APG, 300, 10/82, folios 146ff.).

24. APG, 358/132 (a German copy of the original).

25. The German text is given in W. Mannhardt, *Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten,* 93–95.

26. Ibid., 94.

27. GAA, I, No. 1647; W. Mannhardt, *Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten,* 106–107.

28. Unruh, "Kolonisatorische Berührungen," 260.

29. *Orlofferfelde Chronik,* 5.

30. W. Mannhardt, *Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten,* 106; others wondered if the destruction was perhaps designed to get rid of competition.

31. See Sutton, *King's Honor,* 120–134.

32. According to military reports made by Russian and Saxon military forces, as quoted in W. Mannhardt, *Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten,* 108.

33. Ibid., 128.

34. Ibid., 128.

35. In 1775, Elder Heinrich Donner and Peter Regier were sent by Mennonite leaders to petition the king for a charter of liberties (ibid., 128).

36. APG, sig. 836/1, 1–119. Heinrich Donner, in a hand-written chronicle, untitled, and bearing the following inscription on page 1: "Anno 1774, d. 20. Septembr. Habe ich in diesem Buche angefangen anzuschreiben, was sich in unserer Gemeine, zeit meiner bedienung merkwürdiges zugetragen, Hendrich Donner, Schönesee," cited here as Donner, *Chronik.* The references are to pages 12–13.

37. The document has often been printed, and is widely disseminated. See GStaPK, I, Rep. 90, Abt. A, Titel X. 2a.

38. Ludwig, *Besiedlung,* 120.

39. The local church inspector made this complaint to the royal court (W. Mannhardt, *Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten,* 141).

40. Chodowiecki, *Reise von Berlin nach Danzig,* 62.

41. Donner, *Chronik,* 88–89.

42. The text is found in GStaPK, Berlin: II Hauptabteilung, Generaldirektorium, Rep. 84a, 2087.

43. W. Mannhardt, *Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten,* LXXXVII. The king declared that ever more land holdings carrying military obligations were being

withdrawn from the supply base of the "defenders of the Fatherland" (*Vaterlands-Vertheidigern*).

44. Donner, *Chronik*, 118–119.

45. GStaPK, Berlin: II Hauptabteilung, Generaldirektorium, Rep 84a, 2087, section 10: "Was aber die Kinder betrifft, . . . so sollen dieselben . . . in der Religion desjenigen ihrer Eltern, welches diesem Glaubensbekenntniss nicht zugethan ist, erzogen werden."

46. W. Mannhardt, *Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten*, 142–143.

47. Ibid., 142.

Chapter 9. A Changing View

1. Johanna Schopenhauer, *Im Wechsel der Zeiten*, 75, 79.

2. GStaPK, Preussisches Staats-Ministerium, Bd. 1, Rep. 90, Abt. A, X, 103–104.

3. Donner, *Chronik*, 115; W. Mannhardt, *Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten*, 147.

4. Donner, *Chronik*, 115.

5. W. Mannhardt, *Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten*, 149.

6. M. Jantzen, in his "At Home in Germany?" cites W. Mannhardt, *Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten*, 153, in this context.

7. Reiswitz and Wadzeck, *Beiträge*, I, V; Jantzen, "At Home in Germany?" 131.

8. W. Mannhardt, *Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten*, 157.

9. Ibid., 161.

10. Ibid., 166.

11. Ibid., 171–173.

12. The king issued this authorization to local authorities on 25 August 1813 (W. Mannhardt, *Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten*, 171).

13. In response, the Prussian government ordered a delay in issuing emigration visas and also decreed that collection of the new assessments be halted.

14. W. Mannhardt, *Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten*, 180.

15. Ibid., 181–183.

16. GStaPK, I, Rep. 77, Tit. 31, no. 2, vol. 2, fols. 43–45, quoted in Jantzen, "At Home in Germany?" 156.

17. Numerous letters and articles in *Mennonitische Blätter* in the second half of the nineteenth century reflect the intensity of the discussion.

18. J. Donner, "Selbst-Biographie," 101–102; W. Mannhardt, *Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten*, 47.

19. See also Cate, *Geschiedenis der Doopsgezinde*, II, 8–20.

20. W. Mannhardt, *Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten*, 188–189.

21. Harder, *Monatsschrift* (May 1848), 16.

22. Kastner, *Rheinische Provinciallandtag*, 682–690.

23. For a careful analysis of the wrenching struggle in Mennonite circles as the issue of military service was debated, see Jantzen, "At Home in Germany?"

24. F. Wigard, ed., *Stenographischer Bericht*, 1848, III, 1753.

25. Ibid.

26. Hettinger, *Hermann von Beckerath*, 190.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., 97.

29. W. Mannhardt, *Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten*, 192.

30. Ibid., 202.

31. H. G. Mannhardt, "Entstehung," 7.

32. Ibid., 98.

33. The Liberal Party (*Liberalen*) chose Warkentin as its nominee (ibid., 99).

34. Ibid., 102.

35. The selected delegates were Elders Gerhard Penner, Heubuden; Johann Toews, Ladekopp; Johann Wiebe, Fürstenwerder; Johann Penner, Thiensdorf; and Peter Bartel, Gruppe. The latter wrote an account of the mission, "Beschreibung der persönlichen Bemühung der fünf Ältesten" (cited as Bartel, "Beschreibung"). I received a copy from Elder Bartel's great-grandson, Siegfried Bartel.

36. Bartel, "Beschreibung," 2, 3.

37. Ibid., 9–10.

38. The crown prince was, of course, right. Four years later, Russia implemented such a policy.

39. H. G. Mannhardt, "Entstehung," 101.

40. Ibid., 104.

41. H. G. Mannhardt, *Danziger Mennonitengemeinde*, 176, 177.

42. *Glaubensbekenntnis der Mennoniten in Preussen* (1895), 18.

43. *Glaubensbekenntnis der Mennoniten in Preussen und Russland* (1860), 31.

44. *Glaubensbekenntnis der Mennoniten in Preussen* (Elbing, 1836), 38.

45. H. G. Mannhardt, "Entstehung," 106.

46. H. G. Mannhardt, *Taten und Helden*.

47. Von Kügelen, quoting the *St. Petersburger Zeitung*, in *Ostdeutsche Monatshefte*, 1224–1225.

48. Händiges, *Seid Eurer Väter wert!* See also his *Die Lehre der Mennoniten*, 1921.

Epilogue

1. The text of the 1763 Manifesto is printed in English translation in Stumpp, *Emigration from Germany to Russia*.

2. APG, 836/1.

3. Donner, *Chronik*, 35.

4. GStaPK, Berlin, Hauptabteilung, Generaldirektorium, Westpreussen und Netzedistrikt, CIX, 1, vol. II, 1.

5. Ibid., 15.

6. Ibid., 1.

7. Ibid., 6,7.

8. Donner, *Chronik*, 37, 38.

9. GStaPK, Berlin, Hauptabteilung, Generaldirektorium, Westpreussen und Netzedistrikt, CIX, 1, vol. II, 1.

10. Ibid., 20.

11. Ibid., 12.

12. Ibid., 18.

13. Ibid., 26.

14. Ibid, 40, 41.

15. Ibid., 34.

16. Donner, *Chronik*, 116.

17. Neumeyer, *Westpreussen*, 315.

18. *Orlofferfelde Chronik*, 315.

19. Gundermann, *General-Kirchen und Schulvisitationen*, 695.

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British Library
California State University Fresno Library
Fresno Pacific University Library and Archives
Gemeentearchief Amsterdam
Goshen College Mennonite Historical Library
Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf, Bestand Jülich-Berg.
Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.
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Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart
Library of Congress. Rare Books
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Mennonitische Forschungstelle, Weierhof, Germany
Staatsarchiv Hamburg
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